

PACIFIC GROVE – CAR FREE

Pacific Grove, Monterey County's lush hideaway is dream for visitors who love to ditch the car. Tucked between the scenic 17-mile Drive and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the area offers thriving tide pools, rare, white quartz sand dunes, 100+acre Del Monte Forest housing hundreds of native plant and bird species and a world-class annual migration of Monarch Butterflies. The quirky town founded as a Methodist retreat has imposed a special tax to buy trees for butterflies, eschews stoplights and boasts the oldest lighthouse in continuous use on the West Coast. It is also home to some 1,270 historic buildings.

STAY:

For a retro fix, check out Andril Fireplace Cottages with expansive back lawns, bbqs and that 50s gin & tonic tone. Other picks include the Butterfly Grove Inn, Lighthouse Lodge and Bide-a-Wee Inn and a host of historic B&Bs including the Seven Gables Inn, Martine Inn and Green Gables Inn. Gay friendly: The newly renovated Anton Inn is just the ticket, two blocks from the beach. Just down the street, Asilomar offers a steal of a deal in the Julia Morgan-designed complex (1913); the hearty breakfast in Crocker Hall is a great fueler before a day of hiking along the Pacific. www.visitasilomar.com. www.andrilcottages.com, www.antoninn.com.

PLAY:

- Grab a bike and ride the scenic 17-Mile Drive (no charge) all the way to Carmel
- Pop into the Point Pinos Lighthouse for a quick buzz of all things sea-worthy (free)
- Enjoy a self-led audio walking tour of flora/fauna or architecture at Asilomar (free)
- Stroll the poor man's Pebble Beach – the Pacific Grove Golf Links – or tee up on the back nine, a seaside fairway complete with ice plant and black-tailed deer
- Chill out at Asilomar State Beach for the afternoon and watch hang-gliders ply the sky
- Catch the "Feast of Lanterns" a five day celebration every July
- Get up close and personal with fluttery things at the seasonal Monarch Grove Sanctuary (free)
- Bike into downtown Pacific Grove for boutique shopping or a peek at *Cannery Row's* Holman Department Store
- As the sun sizzles, hit it to the dunes boardwalk from Asilomar Beach to the Inn at the Spanish Bay for cocktails; every night a traditional bag piper chimes between 5:15 and 6:30 p.m.
- Hike Del Monte Forest, a 100-acre wonder packed with 400 species of birds and animals
- Kayak Stillwater Cove via Adventures by the Sea's launch in Pacific Grove
- Stroll from the beach to the local Fish Wife restaurant for local calamari or sustainable seafood at Passionfish
- Search out that favorite crustacean via a tide pool trek

VISITOR INFO.

Monterey County is located 120 miles/192 km south of San Francisco and 345 miles/552 km north of Los Angeles along the classic California corridor. The region boasts 99 miles of prime Pacific Coastline, the

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, three historic missions, 40,000 acres of premium vineyards, 25 golf courses and nearly 200 lodging properties. Monterey County includes the Monterey Peninsula, Big Sur, North County and the Salinas Valley. The Monterey Peninsula Airport (MRY), just three miles from historic downtown Monterey and minutes from the area's major attractions, is served by non-stop flights to and from Denver (DEN), Las Vegas (LAS), Phoenix (PHX), Los Angeles (LAX), and San Francisco (SFO). www.seemonterey.com.

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