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***NATURE AT ITS NAKED BEST - ADVENTURE/EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL HITS A HIGH NOTE IN MONTEREY COUNTY WITH  
CONDOR CAMPS, CATTLE ROUND-UPS & KAYAK SURFING***

*The New Breed of “Do Versus See” Traveler Is Turning the Tide of Tourism*

**MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIF.** – Travelers today seek more than a hot little hammock to tick away their vacation time. According to the Travel Industry of America, adventure pursuits are taking a front seat in travel planning, including activities such as kayaking, scuba diving and mountain climbing. The new breed of “experiential travelers” is also on the rise, according to TravelZoo’s Gabe Saglie. This concept translates into less time “zoning out” and more time learning or experiencing a destination’s assets from the ground up. According to Saglie, more than 50 percent of Americans are interested in this type of travel.

This new travel niche is one of the fastest growing sectors in the travel industry, largely driven by Baby Boomers who are no longer content being tourists, and would rather break out as adventurers. It’s the “do” versus “see” mentality, the demand for “real” experiences that are putting companies like Mountain Travel/Sobek, National Geographic Expeditions and Mansour Travel Company into overdrive. According to Gary Mansour, “Experiential travel is the hot ticket these days and ‘authentic’ is the prevailing buzzword. These global nomads are not content sitting poolside; they want genuine experience, stunning natural surroundings and locally inspired activities.”

***MAPPING OUT MONTEREY COUNTY***

Safari with sea lions, cavort with California condors or dive for monsters of the deep... the region’s natural assets are a ready-to-wear adventure for travelers seeking the real deal, California-style. With 99 miles of pristine coastline, the 5,312 sq. mile Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, stunning string of California parklands and outback of Big Sur, this region is rich in rewards year round.

***LIQUID ASSETS – KAYAK SURFING, ESTUARY SAFARIS & SCUBA FOR MONSTERS OF THE DEEP***

Dive in for an adrenalin-based escape fresh with bracing sea breezes and wide open spaces. New on the radar of ocean experiences is **Kayak Surfing**. For the ultimate challenge, dump the longboard and take to the waves in a kayak. Learn the art of carving, roll techniques and how to get in/out of the wave in a safe, serene environment. Lessons and a full line of specialty surf kayaks are available at Kayak Connection. Those hot on Laird Hamilton’s new sport can hit the waves running with classes in **S.U.P. – or stand-up paddling**. This trend emanating from Hawaii combines surfing with

canoe-style paddling in a stand up position, exercising the core and sense of balance. Learn to walk on water via classes covering the basics of balance, strokes and paddling techniques. [www.adventuresbythesea.com](http://www.adventuresbythesea.com), [www.kayakconnection.com](http://www.kayakconnection.com), [www.montereybaykayas.com](http://www.montereybaykayas.com).

Avid SCUBA divers can track the monsters of the deep -- reportedly sighted just off the Big Sur Coast -- or the bizarre giant squid with three hearts, blue blood and enormous brains spotted in the depths of **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary**. Novices can sleuth the seas via Monterey Bay Dive Center with a full day Discover SCUBA program. Instruction and dives at the Sanctuary (with an underwater canyon twice as deep as the Grand Canyon), Point Lobos State Nature Preserve or San Carlos Beach offer insight into the region's rich diversity of sea life. [www.montereybaydivecenter.com](http://www.montereybaydivecenter.com). For the smaller set, **Monterey Bay Aquarium's** Underwater Explorers program treats kids 8 - 13 years to an aquatic adventure with a surface SCUBA dive in the Great Tide Pool on Monterey Bay. [www.mbayaq.org](http://www.mbayaq.org).

For a vivid postcard of this region's ecosystem and wealth of wildlife, naturalists can dial into the **Elkhorn Slough Safari**, a classic outback tour aboard a 27-foot pontoon. Spreading 1,400 acres and reaching inland nearly seven miles from the coast, the Elkhorn Slough Reserve steps up with some 400 plant species, 80 kinds of fish and 340 types of birds, including such rare species as the Peregrine Falcon and Snowy Plover. Photo safaris and birding workshops are also available. Kayaking the slough is another option. [www.elkhornslough.com](http://www.elkhornslough.com).

The enormous depths of Monterey Bay paired with a 99-mile stretch of coastline draw a rich and varied lineup of whales and wildlife. Among the most impressive are gray whales, some 7,000 behemoths, migrating from the Bering Sea to Mexico's Baja Peninsula between December and March. Also popular are humpbacks and blue whales, the largest animals in the world, which feed on the nutrient-rich waters from June through October-November. Visitors can tap into a **whale watching tour**, rent a sailboat or stay closer to shore with a naturalist-led kayak tour with Adventures by the Sea. [www.chriswhalewatching](http://www.chriswhalewatching), [www.adventuresbythesea.com](http://www.adventuresbythesea.com).

#### ***CALL OF THE WILD – CONDOR CAMP, BAT TOURS, BEAR ENCOUNTERS & WILD BOAR SAUSAGE***

Clock the comeback of the California condor at **Ventana Wildlife Society's** newly-constructed (4/09) condor base camp. With a wingspan of nearly 10 feet, North America's largest land bird and one of the largest flying birds in the world is truly a magnificent sight to see. Enthusiasts can overnight at the rustic rearing/release facility set 2,800 ft. above the Pacific in Big Sur and participate in tracking and feeding these giants of the sky. Happy hour includes watching the birds fly in to roost as the sun sets, followed by a hike to the feeding grounds. On the endangered species list since 1967, the California condor now thrives on Big Sur's rugged coastline and at Pinnacles National Monument in Soledad. Since 1998, Ventana Wildlife Society has re-established 42 condors to the wild. Other options include day trips to base camp and two-hour tracking tours led by a wildlife biologist using specialized equipment to monitor nesting, feeding and flying habits. [www.ventanaws.org](http://www.ventanaws.org).

Seeking a rendezvous with a Townsend's Big Ear Bat or talusing under 23 million-year-old volcanic rock formations? Hightail it to the **Pinnacles National Monument**. Home of the California condor release program and a crazy collection of crimson conical spires marking the remnants of an ancient volcano along the San Andreas Rift Zone, this is ground zero for ranger-led bat walks, "experiential" night hikes and eyeing 20+ condors who reside on this lunar-

scape. The Monument sports two “talus” caves – a system of passages snaking under and between house-size boulders – offering a natural habitat for bats. Visitors can strike out solo to the Balconies Cave and Bear Gulch Cave, housing some 14 species of bats including the Townsend’s Big Ear bat and Western Mastiff bat, with a wing span of 12 inches. Opened in **1908**, the monument is a true character builder for hikers, climbers and nature lovers. Learn the ropes via Sanctuary Gym, which offers instructional rock climbing day-trips complete with gear. [www.nps.gov/pinn](http://www.nps.gov/pinn); [www.rockgym.com](http://www.rockgym.com).

“Monkeying around” is redefined at **Wild Things**, an exotic animal training facility housing 100+ animals on 50 acres of rugged outback. Set in Steinbeck country just outside the city of Salinas, this working facility and rescue camp offers a deluxe seven-hour Walk with the Animals program. Sign up for a stint washing an African elephant, training session with Brandi (an American black bear of Grizzly Adams fame) or take the ultimate catwalk with an exotic cat or Elvis the kangaroo. Also allowed: monkey play dates or quality time fluffing up the lions. Guests can overnight in four safari-style suites on a remote savanna, with breakfast delivered by an elephant. [www.wildthingsinc.com](http://www.wildthingsinc.com).

Pack those chaps and spurs for an authentic cattle drive at **V6 Ranch** in Parkfield, the self-proclaimed “Earthquake Capital of the World” where residents prefer their eggs scrambled and martinis shaken. Just 23 miles from Highway 101, this rustic town of lodge pole cabins and wide open spaces is officially the most studied spot on earth for earthquakes. Here, wannabe cowboys can saddle up for a real Western cattle drive on 50 miles of trails at the Varian family’s 20,000 acre ranch. Rides include plenty of daytime cattle work, delicious ranch style fixin’s and fireside sing-alongs once the sun sets. V6 also offers a “Ranch Life in California” program teaching traditional Vaquero horsemanship from a Hall of Fame Honoree, including the basics of team sorting, rope handling and working cattle by horseback. [www.parkfield.com](http://www.parkfield.com). True city slickers can opt for day rides at Holman Ranch, Pebble Beach Equestrian Center, Molera Horseback Tours and Marina Equestrian Center. [www.holmanranch.com](http://www.holmanranch.com); [www.ridepebblebeach.com](http://www.ridepebblebeach.com); [www.molerahorsebacktours.com](http://www.molerahorsebacktours.com).

Hunting for a little breakfast is harder than it sounds, especially if wild boar is on the menu. Hunters with an ancestral urge bag a boar and pack home a little homemade sausage can get their fix on 30,000 acres of fertile hunting grounds surrounding Fort Hunter Liggett and King City, often called the “**Wild Boar Capitol of California.**” Weighing in at 200+ lbs., with two-inch tusks, wild boar are not an easy big game get and are usually tracked on private land requiring a qualified guide. Daily treks in Steinbeck Country’s verdant rolling hills dotted with California oak and the meandering Salinas River are offered by a variety of outfitters. Pack a sense of adventure. [www.edrothhunting.com](http://www.edrothhunting.com).

### ***TERRA FIRMA – MUSING MONARCHS, AGRICULTURAL TREKS & LOST LIMEKILNS***

If tracking migration patterns of tropical insects is on the agenda, the **Monarch Grove Sanctuary** is the call for an up close peek at thousands of butterflies. Tucked into a residential enclave in Pacific Grove, this free frolic is a top winter spot for Monarchs who flutter as far as 2,000 miles at a height of 10,000 feet. Led by the earth’s magnetic field and position of the sun, each year new butterflies arrive en masse to cluster in the pine and eucalyptus trees from October to February. Docents are available for informal tours. [www.pgmuseum.org](http://www.pgmuseum.org).

It’s not often an area can lay claim to being a hotbed for wintering eagles. Enter Lake San Antonio and its annual **Eagle Watch Tours** that kick off every January. Known as one of the largest bald and golden eagle winter habitats in Central

California, this region's bonanza of fresh fish, mild climate and limited human impact make the 17-mile long lake and environs a hot ticket from November to April with birds migrating south from Alaska, British Columbia and Oregon. The 2 ½ hour tours run January and February aboard a 56-foot boat that enables visitors an insider's perch. Moss Landing is another hot spot for birders, pack the binoculars for a fine feathered getaway. [www.co.monterey.ca.us/parks](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/parks).

What better way to learn you're ABC's than a hands-on tour of the "Salad Bowl of the World"? **Ag Venture Tours** hit the fields running with an exploratory look at planting, harvesting, new farming techniques and the wonders of the region's artichokes, broccoli and cauliflower. This is a full sensory experience from walking through the row crops to sniffing the salad greens and in-depth look at America's top greens producer. [www.agventuretours.com](http://www.agventuretours.com).

Pounding the pavement in Monterey County is sheer bliss; just ask any athlete who has crossed the finish line at the annual Big Sur International Marathon, Sea Otter Classic or Seagate Triathlon in Pacific Grove. The **Monterey Recreation Trail** is a solid start for pairing pavement with unsurpassed scenery. This path traverses the Monterey Bay coastline past Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row and Fisherman's Wharf. The trail also gives riders a view of surfers tackling frothy waves at Seaside State Beach, as well as hang gliders catching a breeze over the dunes of Marina State Beach.

Pebble Beach's **17-Mile Drive** is a must-see for every cyclist. Rated as one of the top 100 routes to pedal in America, this ride is an excellent way to experience the 5,300-acre Pebble Beach community. Riders can start at any of the three main Pebble Beach gates and follow the signs past manicured lawns, emerald greens and jaw-dropping views of the Pacific coast. [www.pebblebeach.com](http://www.pebblebeach.com).

For off-road enthusiasts, **Fort Ord** steps up with a massive network of 86 miles of trails on 7,200 acres of biking nirvana. Experts can head for the Hurl Hill Trail or Staircase Trail, often compared to the great rocky trails in Moab, Utah. The Oil Well Road route is an excellent introduction to the single-track wonders of Fort Ord. The 11-mile loop delivers riders through beautiful wooded areas in the northeast corner of the park. For a bigger burn, tackle the Guidotti/Goat Trail Loop, a 13-mile, clockwise ride with a mixed bag of terrain including high ridges, maritime chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands and wetlands. Another off-road option is the Old Coast Road in Big Sur, an 18.5-mile loop including steep climbs through towering redwoods and babbling brooks before reaching the ocean at Bixby Landing. [http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/ca/en/fo/hollister/fort\\_ord/index.html](http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/ca/en/fo/hollister/fort_ord/index.html).

Hikers and trail runners can slip into a variety of venues spanning Point Lobos State Nature Reserve to the outback of **Big Sur** as well as the hillside trails of **Toro Park** and **Garland Ranch Regional Park** in Carmel Valley. For a true *Raiders of the Lost Ark* adventure, Big Sur Hiking Guides lead visitors to a magical site cutting deep through towering redwoods along several lush creeks to 100-year old lost limekilms. Other top picks include the strenuous hike to Sykes Hot Springs or moderate Ewoldsen Trail, a 4.5-mile loop tucked deep in the redwood forest along McWay Creek. The Pfeiffer Falls Trail and McWay Waterfall Trail both culminate with spectacular waterfalls. For top views, the Andrew Molera State Park/Creamery-Ridge Trail features a 7.3-mile loop with a moderately strenuous climb gaining over 1,200 feet in just over two miles. [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com).

**CONCRETE DREAMS – PULLING G'S & BOULDERING LAND ROVERS**

Need a tune up on technical driving skills? Check out the **Land Rover™ Experience Driving School** in Carmel Valley where signing on the dotted line will deliver a sweat-inducing spin through 80 acres of rugged terrain in a plush \$76,000 Range Rover. Rev things up on the off-road obstacle course with one-on-one training on advanced techniques like winching and vehicle recovery. Not for the timid, the school puts drivers through the paces of maneuvering over sand traps, boulders, tricky wooded trails and descents steep enough challenge a veteran Everest climber.

[www.landroverusa.com](http://www.landroverusa.com)

Foiling urban idiots just got easier with one-day courses at **Skip Barber Racing School at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca**. Cut loose and pull some “g’s” in a 150 h.p. formula racecar for the true testosterone test. The “One Day Combo” puts the pedal to the metal with instruction on high performance defensive driving skills including slide and recovery techniques, trailbraking and race-style heel-and-toe downshifting. Strap into a high-octane Dodge Viper on the world-famous 2.24-mile, 11-turn track and approach the Corkscrew Turn at 100 m.p.h., practicing braking, downshifting and cornering in split second intervals. [www.skipbarber.com](http://www.skipbarber.com).

### ***ALIVE IS THE AIR – FREEFALL AT 120 M.P.H, GET AIR & GLIDE***

Push the automatic “Rush” button and take the plunge via the “world’s highest tandem jump” at 18,000 feet with **Skydive Monterey Bay**. A quick 20-minute training and safety briefing, paired with an instructor and dual harness, is all that’s required for the tandem skydive, one of the safest and certainly surreal experiences for first time divers. Get a condor’s-eye view of the Monterey peninsula and Marine National Sanctuary following a throat-choking one-minute freefall clocking in at 120 miles per hour. [www.skydivemontereybay.com](http://www.skydivemontereybay.com). For a more sedate experience, strap in for an aerial sightseeing tour aboard a beautiful Cessna 172 at **Monterey Bay Aviation**. Soar over the Salinas Valley, Carmel and Big Sur in a climate controlled cabin with a direct ear to the pilot. [www.montereybayaviation.com](http://www.montereybayaviation.com).

On the waterfront, **Marina State Beach** has become the tipping point for hang-gliders and kite boarders, thanks to its infusion of powerful afternoon and early evening winds. Visitors can set up and launch just south of the parking lot. Punctuated with surfers silently riding the horizon and a scenic boardwalk threading through the Marina Dunes Preserve, this area celebrates its qiomtessemce with an annual Festival of Winds and Steeple Chase Event every May,

### **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 over 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), San Diego (SAN) and San Francisco (SFO). [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com).

### ***2010 ANNUAL EVENTS LIST***

Jan 1	Rio Grill Resolution Run	<a href="http://www.riogrillsresolutionrun.com">www.riogrillsresolutionrun.com</a>
Jan -Feb	Bald Eagle Watch Tours	<a href="http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/parks">www.co.monterey.ca.us/parks</a>

Feb 7-13	AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am	<a href="http://www.attpbgolf.com">www.attpbgolf.com</a>
Mar 26	Big Sur Mud Run	<a href="http://www.bsim.org">www.bsim.org</a>
Apr 14-17	Sea Otter Classic Cycling Festival	<a href="http://www.seaotterclassic.com">www.seaotterclassic.com</a>
May 1	Big Sur International Marathon	<a href="http://www.bsim.org">www.bsim.org</a>
May 7-8	Marina Intl. Festival of the Winds	<a href="http://www.marinafestival.com">www.marinafestival.com</a>
May 15	Monster Jam	<a href="http://www.salinassportscomplex.com">www.salinassportscomplex.com</a>
July 20	Professional Bull Riding	<a href="http://www.pbrnow.com">www.pbrnow.com</a>
July 21-24	California Rodeo Salinas	<a href="http://www.carodeo.com">www.carodeo.com</a>
July 22-24	Red Bull Grand Prix/Moto GP	<a href="http://www.mazdaraceway.com">www.mazdaraceway.com</a>
Aug 18-20	Rolex Monterey Historic Car Races	<a href="http://www.mazdaraceway.com">www.mazdaraceway.com</a>
Aug 21	Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance	<a href="http://www.pebblebeachconcours.net">www.pebblebeachconcours.net</a>
July 4-10	Nature Valley Tee Open	<a href="http://www.thefirstteeopen.com">www.thefirstteeopen.com</a>
Sept 9-11	Seagate Triathlon at Pacific Grove	<a href="http://www.tricalifornia.com">www.tricalifornia.com</a>
Sept 16-18	Monterey Sports Car Championships	<a href="http://www.mazdaraceway.com">www.mazdaraceway.com</a>
<b>TBD Events</b>		
September	Birding Workshop	<a href="http://www.elkhornslough.com/birding.html">www.elkhornslough.com/birding.html</a>
October	Monterey Festival of Speed	<a href="http://www.mazdaraceway.com">www.mazdaraceway.com</a>
October	Marina Air Faire	<a href="http://www.marina-airfaire.com">www.marina-airfaire.com</a>
October	Pebble Beach Equestrian Championship	<a href="http://www.ridepebblebeach.com">www.ridepebblebeach.com</a>
November	Big Sur Half Marathon	<a href="http://www.bigsurhalfmarathon.com">www.bigsurhalfmarathon.com</a>
November	Callaway Golf Pebble Beach Invitational	<a href="http://www.pebblebeach.com">www.pebblebeach.com</a>

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