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***FREE-FOR-ALL: MONTEREY COUNTY MAKES THE "A" LIST THIS SUMMER
FOR AFFORDABLE ADVENTURES ALONG THE PACIFIC***

Tap into the Region's Top 20 Free Events, Tours and Insider Jaunts

MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIF. — Families on a budget can tap into Monterey County's "A" list of activities, tours and adventures this summer without breaking the bank. The region's Top 20 picks make a getaway along Monterey Bay exciting and affordable.

TOP 20 PICKS

- 1) **Asilomar Tours** – Perched on the Pacific, Asilomar offers a dream combination of historic architecture, forested hiking trails and ready-to-wear dunes topped with wooden walking trails. Reserve a free personal "Asilomar Ramble" tour with the local California State Parks ranger and cut loose on 80 acres. Key sites include 16 structures designed by Julia Morgan (Hearst Castle) between 1913 and 1928. Self-guided audio tours (\$5) also available. www.visitasilomar.com; 831.372.4076.
- 2) **California Rodeo Salinas (July)** – Saddle up and set out for one of the country's top pro bull riding, bareback bronco and barrel racing events in the heart of Steinbeck Country. Free and definitely frivolous are the two Rodeo Horse Parades held in Old Town Salinas with 300+ prancing steeds topped with costumed riders. Kids are also free on opening night at the Rodeo. www.carodeo.com; 800.771.8807.
- 3) Walk **Monterey's Path of History**, one of the must-do activities of the peninsula. This self-guided, two-mile tour of Old Monterey is marked by easy to distinguish yellow tiles set in the sidewalk. This walk explores adobes, gardens and sites of interest. Maps are available for individuals and groups as well as a free download of Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau's SeeMonterey audio tour of the Path of History. For information about the Path of History or to download the free audio tour visit www.SeeMonterey.com/monterey-adobes. Monterey State Historic Park; 831.649.7172.
- 4) **River Road Wine Trek** - Uncork the oenophile inside with a tasty trek along the burgeoning River Road, featuring a dozen award-winning wineries. Paralleling the Salinas Valley, this verdant drive just off Highway 101 includes

Wrath, Marilyn Remark, Richard Boyer Wines and Pessagno Winery, among others. This area is becoming the flagship region of Pinot Noir and other quality wines. Check out the commercial cactus vineyard – a wild landscape of growing green – or hit the outback for a hike along the way. www.montereywines.org; 831.375.9400.

- 5) **Carmel Bach Festival (July)** – Visitors bent on Baroque can pass on the expensive tickets and cash in on three free classical concerts slated for late July. Top picks include the Festival’s Family Concert series at Carmel’s Sunset Center and Chorale Concert at Oldemeyer Center in Seaside. The festival runs in July and August at a variety of outstanding venues including Carmel Mission Basilica and Church in the Forest in Pebble Beach. www.bachfestival.org; 831.624.2046.
- 6) **Play Misty for Movie Buffs** – From *Basic Instinct* to *Bandits*, Monterey County has a rich and varied film history given its topographical diversity and star-quality backdrops. From the farm fields of Salinas and Spreckles (*East of Eden*) to the Sardine Factory (*Play Misty for Me*) and the quaint town of Pacific Grove (*Turner & Hooch*), link the dots with the free *Movie Map of Monterey County* or *Literary Map* outlining the region’s rich literary history. www.seemonterey.com; www.filmmonterey.org; 831.646.0910.
- 7) **West End Celebration (August)** – Tap into the emerging artists community of Sand City, tucked beneath sand dunes just outside Monterey. The Annual West End Celebration blends dozens of resident artists with live music, street performers, dancing and distinctive food. A map outlining studio tours and new mix-use complexes that have sprouted throughout the funk zone. www.sandcity.org; 831.394.3054, ext. 10.
- 8) **Point Lobos State Nature Reserve** – Noted as “the crown jewel of the state park system” this reserve just south of Carmel offers headlands, coves, rolling meadows and one of the richest underwater habitats in the world. Formerly the home of a turn-of-the-century whaling and abalone industries, today the reserve shares space with thousands of seabirds, seals, sea lions, migrating gray whales and a diverse network of hiking trails. Scheduled guided walks posted at the entrance, free to walk-ins. Parking fee. www.parks.ca.gov; 831.624.8413.
- 9) **Biking Fort Ord** – An impressive network of new trails have opened on the former military base including 86 miles of scenic mountain bike trails and roads. Experts can head for the Hurl Hill Trail or Staircase Trail, often compared to the great rocky trails in Moab, Utah. Flat tracks winding around ponds and forests festooned with wildflowers cater to the leisure rider. Maps available at trailhead entrances along Highway 68 and Reservation Road. www.ca.blm.gov/hollister/trail_map_fo.html; 831.394.8314.
- 10) **Cherry’s Jubilee (September)** – Grab a lawn chair and mark your spot for the free “Show ‘n Shine” cruise of more than 1,000 classic cars through Cannery Row, Pacific Grove and downtown Monterey kicking off the Cherry’s Jubilee three-day event. www.cherrysjubilee.org; 831.759.1836.
- 11) **Pacific Grove Monarch Sanctuary** – Monarchs west of the Rockies migrate to locations on the central California coast. En route, they may travel as far as 2,000 miles, covering one hundred miles per day, and flying as high as 10,000 feet. See thousands of migrating Monarch butterflies at their temporary winter home in Pacific Grove between October and February. www.ci.pg.ca.us/monarchs/default.htm; 831.648.5716

- 12) **Earthbound Farm** – Get downright dirty with all things squirmy via a Bug Walk or mix it up with a local chef or florist at Earthbound Farm, the nation’s largest producer of organic greens. Flowers, herbs and vegetables take the show on 60 acres in Carmel Valley. Saturdays are a true beehive of activity; morning tours start at 10:00 a.m. (May – September). www.ebfarm.com; 831.625.6219.
- 13) **Henry Miller Memorial Library** - Henry Miller spent eighteen years (1944 – 1962) living in Big Sur turning out some of his finest work including the *Rosy Crucifixion* and *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch*. The funky library located in a redwood grove offers a variety of poetry readings and plays in the alfresco sculpture garden and stage. Tap into books by Miller and his contemporaries as well as plenty of Big Sur character. www.henrymiller.org; 831.667.2574.
- 14) **The Farm** – The jolly giant farmers standing 20 ft. high in the fields off Highway 68 mark the entrance to The Farm – a great escape hatch for families. Crafted by local artist John Cerney, these larger-than-life statues of packers, trimmers and irrigators are a tribute to the hard-working men and women of Salinas Valley. Stroll the working/demonstration farm that unfolds with rows of artichokes, lettuces, broccoli, celery, flowers and a petting zoo. www.thefarm-salinasvalley.com; 831.455.2575.
- 15) **Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History** – Birds, beasts and all things natural are on display at this wonderful hometown museum marked by Sandy the whale, a life-size bronze sculpture at the entrance. Native cultures, botany, zoology and high caliber displays make for a great day of play. www.pgmuseum.org; 831.648.5716.
- 16) **Andrew Molera State Park** – Get wild in Big Sur at home base for the Ventana Wilderness Society/Big Sur Cultural & Natural History Center, a reintroduction area for the release of the California condor. The Ornithology Lab at the park is a great place to watch bird-banding activities. A series of moderate and rugged hiking trails shoot off from here. Parking fee. www.ventanaws.org; 831.624.1202.
- 17) **Dennis the Menace Playground** – Tap off travel steam aboard a full size 1956 steam engine at this alfresco park designed by Dennis the Menace creator Hank Ketcham. The park, next to El Estero Lake, sports an umbrella tree (climbing tree) and suspension bridge. 831.646.3860.
- 18) **San Carlos de Borromeo Mission** – Founded in 1770 by Padre Junipero Serra, this stunning cathedral is the oldest building on Monterey Peninsula. Situated in just outside of Carmel-by-the-Sea, this cathedral is a statement to Monterey’s Spanish roots. www.sancarloscathedral.net; 831.373.2628.
- 19) **Marina Dunes Preserve** – Strap on those hiking boots and make way via the old sand mining roadway to a bevy of rare and interesting plants and birds at this remote preserve. Popular for fishing and hang-gliding, this is the spot for a simple day of exploration. www.mprpd.org/parks/marina.htm; 831.659.4488.
- 20) **Astronomy Hikes/Pinnacles National Monument** – Get into the wild with an evening exploring the home of the California Condor and Townsend Big-Eared Bat. Seasonal guided night hikes at Pinnacles National Monument kick off with a moderate 1.6-mile trek along the Balconies Trail followed by a sky talk and telescopic views of the heavens courtesy of Hartnell Planetarium and Astronomy Department. Located off Highway 101 outside of Soledad, the 23 million-year old volcanic rock formations and hidden talus caves that make up the Pinnacles offer an inside look at nature at its naked best. www.nps.gov/pinn/index.htm.

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, 24 golf courses and over 250 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.

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