

Salinas - Steinbeck Country for a Two Day Tour

Start the first day of your tour on Main Street in the city's historic **Oldtown Salinas** district. Stop in for a country breakfast or a cup of gourmet coffee at one of Oldtown's restaurants or coffee houses. After breakfast, shop or walk through Oldtown's unique shops, antique stores and art galleries.

Continue your visit at the **National Steinbeck Center**, the centerpiece of historic Oldtown. The National Steinbeck Center is a fun, creative museum that highlights the life and works of author John Steinbeck and offers three distinct visitor experiences (1½ to 2 hours recommended for visit). Through interactive exhibits & games and themed theaters, visitors explore literature in the John Steinbeck Exhibition Hall, art and culture in the Gabilan Gallery and history and agriculture in the Center's Rabobank Agriculture Museum. This wing includes an additional 6,500 square feet of permanent exhibits that explore the stories of Salinas Valley agriculture "from field to fork." Increase your knowledge of John Steinbeck and Salinas Valley agriculture by viewing the two orientation films in the museum theater, spend time walking through the exhibits, participate in one of the Center's many celebrations and browse through the exceptional gift store, which features unique gifts and collectibles in addition to Steinbeck books and movies.



Break for lunch at the one of the many restaurants in Oldtown and enjoy the historic sights of this quaint neighborhood.

Later, take a walk on the wild side with a visit to **Wild Things**, an exotic/wild animal facility. Catch the daily 1 and a 1/4 hour tour starting at 1 p.m. Wild Things is located on Vision Quest Ranch and is home to a number of "animal stars" as well as more than 100 other wild and exotic animals, birds and reptiles. Tour the facility and see "Josef" the lion, the live model for Disney's *The Lion King* and star of *George of the Jungle*; Chui the Leopard, who appeared in Disney's *Mighty Joe Young*; and Brandi the Black Bear, who starred in *Grizzly Mountain*. Other tour times are available to groups by appointment.

Make a final stop at **A Taste of Monterey** in Historic Oldtown Salinas, where you'll sample wines from a selection of Monterey County's fine wineries (35 wineries in one location). The informative staff is qualified to answer an array of questions pertaining to the local wine industry and wine in general. Taste and purchase your favorite vintages or shop for gifts in the on-site gift shop.



As evening nears, catch an entertaining show or performance at the beautiful, historic Fox Theater, built in 1921 and recently renovated. You may choose to try the Fox's "dinner theater" option, where for one price you can dine at **local restaurants** before enjoying a show at the Fox.

Start your second day in Steinbeck Country at **The Farm** for a behind-the-scenes look at life on a working farm (approximately a ½ hour tour). Guests will enjoy the variety of fresh produce available at the farm stand, and children will love The Farm's tractor tours, 30-foot tall farmers, petting the numerous farm animals and exploring the fall corn maze.

Next, visit the **Salinas Sports Complex** (by appointment only), home of the California Rodeo and the Heritage Museum. Take a tour of the complex, located on 80 acres at Sherwood Park in the City of Salinas. The Salinas Sports Complex is also home to a number of community and sports events including concerts, football games, soccer games, motor events, festivals and graduations. Heritage Museum, on the Salinas Sports Complex grounds, is an historic museum housing Rodeo collectibles in four themed rooms, including a Saddle Room and Rodeo Clown Room. Guests will marvel at the authentic Abbott Downing Wells Fargo Stagecoach on display in the museum.

Later, swing by the **Steinbeck House**, John Steinbeck's boyhood home, for a memorable lunch. Recently added to the National Registry of Historic Places, the house is now a restaurant where docents serve a prix fixe menu Tuesday through Saturday. Tours are available with advanced notice.

Spend the afternoon on a journey into the “Salad Bowl of the World,” the fertile Salinas Valley, for a unique agricultural/educational experience. Learn about the row crops, vineyard technology and innovations that have made Monterey County agriculture a \$3.5 billion industry. Take a self-guided tour, stopping at points of interest along the way such as winery tasting rooms (Steinbeck Wine Country map available through the **Monterey County Vintners & Grower Association**), the **Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum**, the **San Antonio and Soledad Missions** and the **Red Wing Horse Sanctuary**. For an interesting guided tour, book a ride with **Ag Venture Tours**. This tour service will customize a tour that focuses on award-winning wineries and farms.



Encourage guests to mark their calendars for much-anticipated annual events such as the **California Rodeo** and **California International Airshow**, the **Steinbeck Festival**, races at **Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca** and outstanding cultural festivals.

For additional information on Salinas Valley, please contact the **Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau** or visit www.MeetInMonterey.com and view the Calendar of Events.

National Steinbeck Center

Wild Things Exotic Animal Park

The Farm

Steinbeck House

Ag Venture Tours

Oldtown Association

A Taste of Monterey

Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association

Monterey County Rural and Agricultural Life Museum

San Antonio Mission

Soledad Mission

Red Wing Horse Sanctuary

Fox Theater

Salinas Sports Complex

California Rodeo

California International Airshow

Steinbeck Festival

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

www.steinbeck.org

www.wildthingsinc.com

www.thefarm-salinasvalley.com

www.steinbeckhouse.com

www.agventuretours.com

www.oldtownsalinas.com

www.tastemonterey.com

www.montereywines.org

www.mcarlm.org/

www.cityofsoledad.com/tourism/sanAntonio.cfm

<http://www.cityofsoledad.com/tourism/missionSoledad.cfm>

www.redwings.org

www.foxtheatersalinas.com

www.salinassportscomplex.com

www.carodeo.com

www.salinasairshow.com

www.steinbeck.org

www.laguna-seca.com