



See Monterey Announces What's New in 2026

A Milestone Year Brings the Reopening of Highway 1, New Historical & Cultural Initiatives and Fresh Ways to Experience Monterey County

Monterey, Calif., (December 16, 2025) — Monterey County is entering 2026 with great momentum and even greater access, introducing new and refreshed lodging, inventive dining concepts, expanded flight options and the long-awaited full reopening of Highway 1 in Big Sur after a nearly three-year closure.

Adding to this excitement are two new [See Monterey](#) initiatives, which will deepen visitor connection to the region: “Monterey 1000,” a yearlong celebration of a millennium of Monterey County history, and “Off the Canvas,” a creative lens on the area’s vibrant public art and the artists behind the pieces. Together, these programs will invite travelers to explore the stories, culture and creativity that shape the destination.

“As we look toward a landmark year for both the nation and the region, Monterey County offers travelers an extraordinary blend of heritage, coastline and creativity,” said Rob O’Keefe, president and CEO of See Monterey. “With Highway 1 reopened and new initiatives launching, 2026 is the ideal moment to rediscover the heart and history of this remarkable part of California.”

Accommodations & Hotel Experiences

New lodging options provide travelers with a diverse selection of distinctive accommodations, milestone developments and new experiences in the New Year.

- [Kimpton Mirador Pacific Grove](#) (Pacific Grove) | Opening Winter 2026
In the heart of “America’s last hometown,” Pacific Grove, this elegant 99-room property brings a new level of hospitality as Kimpton’s first branded property on the Central California coast. Driven by Spanish Revival-inspired architecture, the project includes a signature restaurant, [The Caledonian](#), a courtyard with a fireplace and wellness offerings complimentary to guests — including sound baths, yoga and fitness sessions. The hotel is now accepting reservations for arrivals in early February.
- [Courtyard by Marriott Sand City Monterey and Residence Inn by Marriott Sand City Monterey](#) (Sand City) | Opening January 2026
Sand City’s first hotel property is an ode to the city’s creative culture, featuring a Lido-inspired event space designed to celebrate and showcase the work of local artists. Located within close proximity to [Bayonet Black Horse’s](#) iconic links in Seaside, as well as Carmel and Monterey, the dual-branded hotel also expands visitor access to the region at a more approachable price point.

- [**Carmel Valley Ranch**](#) (Carmel Valley) | Revitalized in Spring 2026
The resort's spa will undergo a refresh in early 2026, with the debut of the new Spa Aiyana slated for spring 2026.
- [**Isabella**](#) (Monterey) | Opening May 2026
Fish Hopper's Shake family will debut their newest venture, operating a boutique 20-room motel.
- [**The Lodge at Pebble Beach**](#) (Pebble Beach) | Reopened October 2025
Boasting a reimagined entryway and expanded Terrace Lounge, this iconic property now invites even more elevated views of Stillwater Cove and the 18th hole of Pebble Beach Golf Links. Two of its dining concepts have reopened — its signature steakhouse, [The Tap Room](#), which also houses the trophy room full of golf memorabilia, and [Stillwater](#), serving Coastal Californian fare.
- [**Casa Palmero New Programming**](#) (Pebble Beach) | Unveiled Fall 2025
Casa Palmero has redefined relaxation with its new Wellness Mini Bar in partnership with Hyperice and HigherDOSE. For a 24-hour rental period, guests can experience spa-level recovery and comfort with advanced tools like infrared sauna blankets, PEMF therapy mats, and percussion massagers — all delivered straight to guestrooms. Additional thoughtful touches like CBD soaks, melatonin teas and plush Kashwére comforts round out the new offering.
- [**Monterey Beach Hotel**](#) (Monterey) | Launched October 2025
Monterey Beach Hotel is excited to welcome both hotel guests and local community members to its newly opened Reset Lab, an al fresco wellness-focused space designed for relaxation, recovery and rejuvenation complete with Scandinavian-inspired Barrel Saunas, invigorating cold plunges and more.

Food & Beverage

New and improved dining experiences offer visitors a wide range of culinary options that celebrate the bounty of Monterey Bay seafood, the fresh produce of the Salinas Valley and the exceptional wines of the region.

- [**Sweet Reba's Bakery & Kitchen**](#) (Salinas) | Opened December 2025
Local favorite bakery Sweet Reba's opened its newest location on Main Street in Salinas, the latest business to open in the vibrant downtown district. Bakery owner Reba Wilson is best known for her appearances on Food Network's "Cake Wars."
- [**Domaine Messier**](#) (Carmel-by-the-Sea) | December 2025
Wine lovers are now able to taste the creations of Domaine Messier, the latest winery to debut in the charming art space of Winfield Gallery in Carmel. Visitors to the new Atelier Domaine Messier can try two personalities of Pinot Noir: the 2023 Cuvée du Nouveau Monde and the 2022 Cuvée Sagittaire, along with the 2023 Rosé of Pinot and the 2023 Chardonnay.
- [**Benny Walkers**](#) (Monterey) | Opening Early 2026

The team behind Seaside's Filipino-inspired [The Butter House](#) is unveiling a new project in downtown Monterey. An American-fusion restaurant, fare will include BBQ, calamari, clam chowder and fish & chips.

- [Corner Market](#) (Carmel-by-the-Sea) | Opening Spring 2026
Helmed by Michelin-starred [Aubergine](#)'s Justin Cogley, Corner Market is poised to be a relaxed yet refined community hub. Local produce and fresh seafood will take center stage, featuring seasonal crudos, grilled oysters and market-style lunches.
- [El Charrito](#) and [Lalla Grill](#) (Marina) | Opening January and February 2026, respectively
This beloved Salinas-born burrito spot, known for its homemade flour tortillas, will open its third outpost in Marina Promenade Shopping Center. The Moncada Group will also introduce the third installment of the Lalla Grill family, delivering exciting new dishes inspired by local flavors.
- [Lepe Cellars Moves to Carmel Valley](#) (Carmel Valley) | Opened October 2025
Lepe Cellars, led by the first Mexican-American winery owner on the Monterey Peninsula, Miguel Lepe, has been a force in the County since 2015. Lepe has moved his Carmel tasting room into a new space in Carmel Valley Village, featuring a shop with winery-exclusive varietals.
- [The Perfect Crumb Bakery](#) (Pacific Grove) | Opened October 2025
Relocating from its Monterey storefront, this local favorite has officially brought its baked goods, coffee and custom cakes & cupcakes to Pacific Grove.
- [VIN By the Sea](#) (Carmel-by-the-Sea) | Opened September 2025
Formerly an art gallery, this boutique wine bar and all-day restaurant evokes an urban-coastal vibe and leads with a curated list of small-production boutique wines. More than 40 selections pair seamlessly with Chef Paul Corsentino's culinary creations.

Tourism Milestones

With detour-free road-tripping along one of the world's most iconic drives and expanded flight service to major cities, accessibility punctuates the narrative of the year ahead.

- [Highway 1 Reopens in Big Sur](#) | Expected March 2026
For the first time since early 2023, travelers will soon be able to experience every mile of the famed Highway 1, with a full reopening anticipated in March 2026. A series of landslides has prevented through-access to Big Sur's central stretch, but the reopening will restore a fully connected drive — and renewed access to the region's beloved highlights.
- [Direct Flight Service Unveiled: MRY to ORD](#) | Launching May 2026
United Airlines will introduce a seasonal, once-weekly nonstop flight between Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), beginning May 23, 2026. The route directly links Chicago travelers to Monterey's coastline, wine country, and dining scene — while giving locals seamless connectivity through United's Chicago hub.
- [Porsche Track Experience](#) (Salinas) | Opening March 2026
Porsche's newest Driving Center debuts in 2026 at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, offering programs ranging from introductory courses to advanced track experiences — giving enthusiasts the opportunity to master the legendary circuit.

- [**Castroville Artichoke Festival**](#) (Castroville) | Returns September 2026
The Castroville Artichoke Festival is officially coming back to its hometown after being held at the Monterey County Fairgrounds for the past decade.
- [**250th Anniversary of the DeAnza Trail**](#)
This 1,210-mile route, weaving through the homelands of more than 70 Tribal communities, retraces the 1775–76 expedition that linked Sonora, Mexico, with what is now San Francisco. Experience history firsthand on the trail, passing directly through Monterey County and offering opportunities for hiking, cycling, storytelling and exploration of early California landmarks.
- [**First Hybrid-Electric Whale Watching Tour in California**](#) (Moss Landing) | Coming Fall 2026
Monterey Bay Eco Tours will unveil the state's first hybrid-electric catamaran to operate whale watching tours out of the Moss Landing Harbor. In partnership with the Monterey Bay Air Resources District and the California Air Resources Board, this plays into California's initiative in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving public health — particularly in disadvantaged communities.
- [**Regenerate 68! Farm certified organic by CCOF**](#) | October 2025
Launched in 2025 by non-profit [Regenerative California](#), Regenerate 68! Farm is a working demonstration site for regenerative organic agriculture training and outcomes-based farming practices led by farmers and innovators in soil health, biodiversity and climate resilience. The Farm was certified organic by California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), marking a milestone for Monterey County, Regenerative California's first pilot region.

For more information, visit [SeeMonterey.com](#). To download high-resolution images, visit our [media gallery](#).

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ABOUT SEE MONTEREY

See Monterey is a 501c6 non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. See Monterey is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to generate community prosperity and enrich economic vitality for Monterey County through the responsible growth of the tourism economy. Travel spending in Monterey County was nearly \$3 billion in 2023, supporting 26,799 jobs and generating \$307 million in state and local tax revenue that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit [www.SeeMonterey.com](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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