

Five Days on the Monterey Peninsula

There is so much to see and do in the Monterey area that you could easily explore it for a week and then come back for more. So, you can either follow the itinerary below or pick and choose depending on how much time you have. Let me know if I can help with anything to make your adventure here more enjoyable. And if you have discovered a hidden treasure, please let me know so I can add it to the adventure list. And here is my list of [restaurants](#) so you can find a great place for lunch or dinner while you explore.

Rick

Day One: Exploring the Monterey Peninsula

Morning: 17 Mile Drive and Carmel by the Sea

Start your adventure with a scenic drive along the renowned [17 Mile Drive](#) that winds its way from New Monterey to Carmel. Along the way, you'll be treated to breathtaking ocean vistas, picturesque golf courses including Pebble Beach, and stunning residences. As you enter through the [Pacific Grove gate](#) at the intersection of 17-Mile and Sunset Drives, you'll find yourself immersed in a world of natural beauty. Get your map at the entry gate and stop at the many points of interest along the way.

Late Morning Early Afternoon: Exploring Carmel

Transition to exploring Carmel by taking a leisurely stroll along [Scenic Drive](#) where you can enjoy the scenic wonder of Carmel Beach. As you continue into downtown Carmel, you'll be enchanted by the village's European charm. With over 90 art studios, galleries, antique shops, boutiques, wine rooms, and intimate cafes, Carmel promises a delightful afternoon of discovery.



CARMEL MISSION



Optional: Carmel Mission: For those interested in a bit of history, consider a visit to the [Carmel Mission](#). Founded by Father Junipero Serra in 1771, the Basilica showcases stunning architecture. Take a walking tour, visit the museum, and explore the mission complex and how it impacted early California Indians and explorers. Saint [Junipero Serra](#) is the only Saint buried in the United States.

Day Two: Marine Life and Coastal Delights

Morning: Monterey Aquarium and Cannery Row

Begin the day with a visit to the world-renowned [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) where captivating ocean



habitats come to life. Explore the Enchanted Kelp Forest, Coral Reef Kingdom, and Rugged Rocky Shore exhibits, and discover the secret lives of otters and other marine life that resides within. Afterward, take a leisurely stroll along [Cannery Row](#), a historic waterfront street made famous by John Steinbeck's novels. If you have read the book Cannery Row, you can reminisce and enjoy the vivid descriptions of the area and the way that it once was.

Afternoon: Lovers Point, Pacific Grove, and Point Pinos Lighthouse

Venture to [Lovers Point](#) in Pacific Grove for a scenic stroll along the recreational trail and then enjoy shopping or lunch at one of the charming local [restaurants](#). Pacific Grove's nickname is America's Last Hometown. Check out the mixture of Victorian and Craftsman homes as you walk around. Perhaps visit the historic [Point Pinos Lighthouse](#) in Pacific Grove, an emblem of maritime history. Explore its halls and ascend to witness sweeping coastal views. During the winter, Pacific Grove is home to a Monarch Butterfly [Sanctuary](#).



Day Three: Nature and Big Sur Drive

Morning: Point Lobos State Park

Immerse yourself in the natural wonder of [Point Lobos State Natural Reserve](#), nestled at the northern edge of Big Sur. Set out on its pleasant hiking trails, offering picturesque vistas, diverse wildlife, and hidden coves. Wander through its landscapes, from meadows to cypress groves, and marvel at the abundance of seabirds, seals, sea lions, and migrating whales.

Rick's Alternative: Soberanes Canyon Trail, Garrapata State Park

Embark on the captivating [Soberanes Canyon Trail](#) in Garrapata State Park. This 1.5 mile out and then back easy to moderate hike starts beneath a canopy of Monterey Cypress trees, leading you through meadowlands along Soberanes Canyon Creek. Admire the profusion of flowers, cross the creek multiple times, pass by Coastal Oaks, and Bay trees, and reach the enchanting realm of giant ferns and Red Woods. If time allows, explore the coastal trails just across the highway.



Afternoon: Big Sur Adventure

Get ready for a remarkable journey along [Highway 1 aka The PCH](#), a drive celebrated for its stunning coastal views. Allow yourself time to stop at the numerous pull-outs and capture the breathtaking scenery with your camera. The Bixby Creek [Bridge](#) was built in 1932 and is one of many that make the Pacific Coast Highway so special. Next stop is Big Sur Village with little shops and fun places to eat including [Nepenthe restaurant](#) overlooking the Pacific Ocean or [Big Sur River Inn](#) where you can dine looking at the river beneath the Red Woods.



Other worthwhile adventures to consider include:

[Andrew Molera State Park](#) where you can hike and see the Big Sur River enter the Pacific Ocean.

[Point Sur Lighthouse](#) offers panoramic views and insightful history, accessible through guided walking tours. Sat and Sun at 10AM.

[Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park](#) and hike amongst the Red Woods to the view the Pfeiffer Falls.

[Pfeiffer Beach](#) (not a state park) known for its purple sand and keyhole arch...best seen at sunset.

[Partington Cove](#) Short but steep trail and tunnel to get to the cove that was a supply point for Tanbark.

[McWay Falls](#) part of the Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, see the McWay creek plunge into the Pacific Ocean



Day Four: More Outdoor Activities

Morning: Whale Watching, Kayaking, Biking, or Segway Engage in the outdoor wonders of Monterey Bay. Choose from various activities, like joining a [whale-watching excursion](#) to witness the awe-inspiring marine life. Alternatively, explore the coastline by [sea kayak](#), bike along picturesque shores, or experience the scenic beauty atop a [Segway](#).

Afternoon: Guided Tours or Golf

Delve into guided tours that bring Monterey's history and landscapes to life through local expertise. Alternatively, golf enthusiasts can tee off at world-renowned courses like [Pebble Beach](#), [Bayonet & Blackhorse](#) or [Pacific Grove Golf Links](#), where the stunning setting enhances the golfing experience.



Day Five: Coastal Wine Country

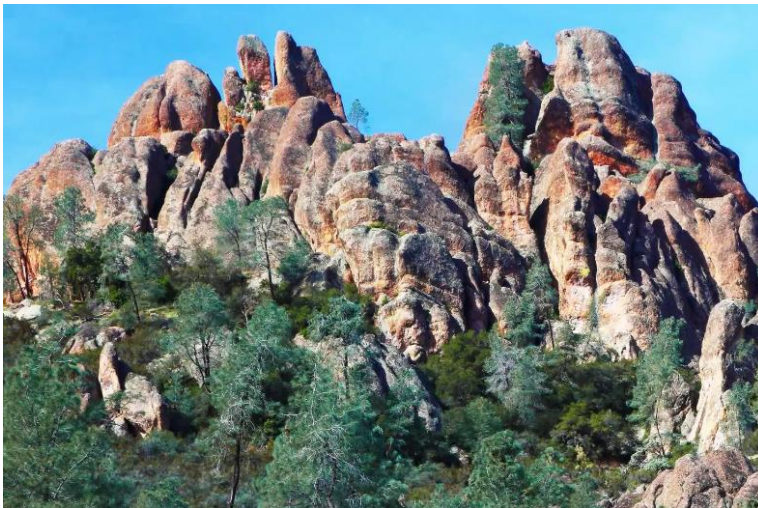
Morning: Plan an excursion off the beaten path into one of [Monterey County Vineyards and Maps](#) and/or take an [Ag Tour with Evan Oaks](#) and discover the Salad Bowl of America or the various wine regions of Monterey.



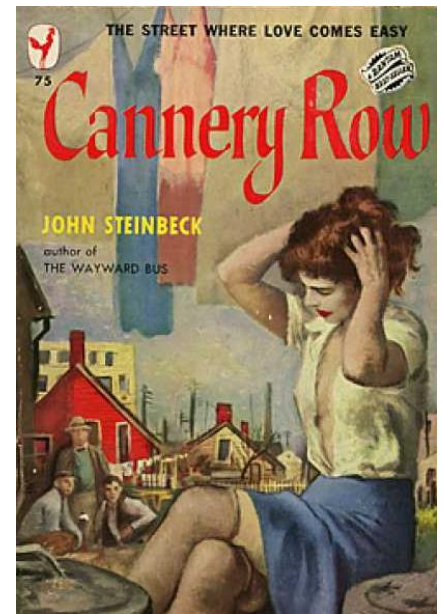
Afternoon: Wine Tasting in Carmel Valley Embark on a journey through Monterey's coastal wine country. Discover exceptional wines that thrive in the region's unique conditions. Enjoy tastings at one of [Monterey County Wines and Vineyards](#) or venture to Carmel Valley's wineries, where you can savor wines that embody Monterey's distinct characteristics.

Additional Ideas:

- **National Steinbeck Center:** Immerse yourself in the legacy of [John Steinbeck](#) and explore the Salinas Valley and Monterey locations that inspired his literary works.
- **Pinnacles National Park:** Some 23 million years ago multiple volcanoes erupted, flowed, and slid to form what would become



with life: prairie and peregrine falcons, golden eagles, and the inspiring California condor.



Pinnacles National Park. What remains is a unique landscape. Travelers journey through chaparral, oak woodlands, and canyon bottoms. Hikers enter rare talus caves and emerge to towering rock spires teeming

- **Horseback Riding:** For a unique perspective of the landscape, enjoy guided [horseback rides](#) in Pebble Beach or Big Sur, taking you through stunning terrains and coastal beauty.
- **Walking Tours:** Discover Monterey's rich history through guided or self-guided [History & Heritage tours](#), exploring historic sites and adobes that offer insights into the area's colorful past.
- **Scuba Diving:** Dive into the underwater wonderland of Monterey Bay, where the cold, nutrient-rich waters harbor diverse marine life and vibrant kelp forests. Explore diving spots like [Bluefish Cove](#) and [Monastery Beach](#).
- **Monterey Bay Harbor:** Venture into [deep-sea fishing](#) or [sailing excursions](#) from Monterey Bay Harbor, enjoying the coastal beauty from a different perspective.

