

# Monterey County

## 25 Great Free Things to Do in Monterey County

1. Get a taste of what life was like in the early days of old Monterey on the Monterey Path of History tour, which visits more than 40 historic buildings and sites (Free self-guided and docent-led tours available).

2. Take a tour and sample hand-made sweets at Monterey Bay Chocolate Factory in Seaside.



3. Walk into (cars are charged a fee, pedestrians are not) Pt. Lobos State Reserve and hike to the cove said to have inspired Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. Visit the Whaling Museum, count the number of wildflowers you see, or picnic where you can watch the waves crash on the rocks.



4. Follow in the footsteps of John Steinbeck's characters in "Cannery Row" by exploring the tide pools of the Monterey Bay coastline, especially near Asilomar State Beach.

5. Bike, rollerblade or jog along the scenic Monterey Bay Coastal Trail, an 18-mile stretch of paved pathway that runs alongside Monterey Bay.

6. Climb a real, full size 1956 steam engine at Dennis the Menace Playground, designed by Dennis the Menace creator's, Hank Ketcham.

7. Learn about Monterey's rich history at Pacific House Museum, from Native American times, through its days as the capital of Spanish and Mexican California, up to the raising of the American flag.

8. Visit the historic Custom House to see where California commerce began, and check out the California 'bank notes' – cattle hides traded by the *California rancheros*.



9. Uncork your inner oenophile by wine-tasting in Carmel Valley or along the Salinas Valley River Road Wine Trail.



10. Visit the bookstore and redwood-shaded lawns at the Henry Miller Memorial Library in Big Sur, honoring the writer who spent 18 years in the area.

11. Grab a kite and head to the sand dunes in Seaside or at Marina State Beach for a day of play. (They're a great place to catch the sunset, too.)

12. Conduct a clam-chowder tasting on Monterey's Fisherman's Wharf – the samples are provided free by several of the wharf's restaurants!

13. Inspect the sea lions on the rocks at the end of the Coast Guard Pier.

14. Do some birding at Elkhorn Slough Estuarine Reserve, Salinas River State Beach or Lake San Antonio. Visit San Antonio in winter and you may spot bald eagles!



*there's more!*

15. Roam more than 80 miles of scenic mountain bike trails and roads on the former Fort Ord military base.

16. See thousands of migrating Monarch butterflies at the Butterfly Sanctuary in Pacific Grove between October and March.



17. Watch gray whales on their annual winter (December-March) migration between Alaska and Mexico from one of Monterey County's promontories: Pt. Pinos, Pt. Lobos or the Big Sur coastline.

18. Enjoy spectacular Carmel Valley views from trails at Garland Ranch Regional Park.



19. Take an "Asilomar Ramble" tour with California State Parks rangers to explore 80 acres that includes historic architecture, forested hiking trails and ready-to-wear dunes topped with wooden walking trails. Key sites include 16 structures designed by Julia Morgan (architect of Hearst Castle) between 1913 and 1928.

20. Walk into San Lorenzo Park in King City to discover the farming past at the Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum.

21. View jolly giant farmers standing 20 ft. high in the fields off Highway 68 at the entrance to The Farm. 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. Follow up with some fresh veggies from the farm stand.



22. Drop into the Monterey Museum of Art during Third Thursday every month: admission is free and there's live entertainment and wine-tasting to accompany the art.

23. Walk the boardwalk from Asilomar State Beach, skirting the golf course of the Inn at Spanish Bay, and picnic in the company of seals, sea otters, and other marine wildlife in Pebble Beach.

24. Build sandcastles on Carmel's famous white, sandy, beach.

25. Visit the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History and pose by Sandy the Whale, a life-size bronze sculpture.



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