

California offers a never ending array of activities such as family fun, movie studio visits and wine tours. Take this Inside Scoop along with your travel documents; it's packed with tips for cool and colourful California dreamin'.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Trivia

Sacramento is the state capital, in the northern Central Valley. The Central Valley is just that—stretching some 650kms down the middle of the state.

Besides Canadians living all over the state, reports vary for those based in Silicon Valley, estimated at some 350,000.

Canada's 2018 population (36.95 million) is close to California's (39.78 million).

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- family excursions/tours
- the numerous wine regions
- best scenic routes to drive
- which cities might suit you
- air travel connections.

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Inside Scoop: CALIFORNIA

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

No matter what you do, you're guaranteed delightful experiences. Whether San Diego or San Francisco, Sonoma or Napa, LA or Monterey, our counsellors have done way more than dreamin' to steer you in the right directions. Some tips:

- We know you want value in balancing choices and amenities with your budget; no matter what, relax and enjoy. Unless you pay for upgrades, requests are only requests such as oceanview room. These are premium (why upgrade fees apply).
- Healthcare isn't covered by provincial plans; you'll be charged for everything. We strongly recommend LeGrow's Travel cancellation/interruption and medical insurance.
- Major credit cards and debit cards are accepted pretty much everywhere (most Canadian banks have affiliations to eliminate withdrawal fees, i.e. Scotiabank clients use Bank of America ATMs without a fee). For credit card security, log the dates you'll be away.
- For cell phones, check with your provider for packages. Internet is widely available.
- You must have a valid passport www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport. Keep a copy of its ID page or snap a cell picture of each passport's ID.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through anything.

What to Do...What to Do...

There's more than enough to please everyone. Great spots abound from slick cities to coastal seascapes, family theme parks to gorgeous nature spots. Of California's 12 regions, Southern "CA" hosts **Los Angeles, Long Beach, Hollywood, Disneyland, Newport Beach, Palm Springs** and **San Diego** (maybe head south for a day to **Tijuana, Mexico?**). Wander around **Santa Barbara** or **Santa Cruz** (check out the beach boardwalk and its Giant Dipper Roller Coaster. Dawdle along the highly scenic **17-Mile Drive** with golfer's paradise **Pebble Beach, Malibu** or **Yosemite National Park** (day trips by coach or train from San Francisco).

Think Canada has a lock on fall foliage? Some of the best is in California's foothill and mountain regions such as **Castle Crags State Park** on Interstate 5, the fabled Canada to Mexico route. Hwy 1 runs along some of the most beautiful coastlines in the world! For a once in a lifetime (or twice) experience, drive the **Highway 1 Classic** trip, a 5 to 7 day road trip with at least 10 suggested noteworthy stops; www.visitcalifornia.com/trip/highway-one-classic. Want a hit now? Listen to a tempting podcast www.visitcalifornia.com/podcast/big-sur-waterfalls-oakland.

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags: put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery and over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers.

Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often at airport security), then place the bag in the tray. You may take baby formula, food or milk if a child aged 2 and under (0-24 months) is travelling.

Items regular travellers pack in carry-on: pen/notebook, disinfectant hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg over borders). Permitted in carry-on: cell phones, laptops, canes, disposable razors and nail clippers. Items you can't take on include corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs, baseball bats, racquets—check with your airline for their



restrictions. Leave room in your bags for purchases; you'll find spectacular produce and food at supermarkets and great deals on clothing. **Tip:** with currency exchange rates and great deals, start at sale racks.

Your Airline

As your plane might be coming in from elsewhere and delayed, confirm your departure time and which airport you arrive at. CATSA can prohibit items as security risks www.catsa.gc.ca/home and note, "Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and **contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).**"

Airline staff are on duty some 2-3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in (and bag-check) closes 1hr before departure. If late, you're not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Note: many airlines "code-share," you have tickets for one airline and fly on another. **Baggage:** Size/weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies: check with the airline.

Los Angeles' airport (LAX) is massive, nine terminals handling 95% of Southern California flights. Other major airports are San Francisco (SFO) and San Jose (SJC) serving Silicon Valley. Your counsellor will advise you which airport you'll use, about rental car arrangements or transfers to a hotel. Since others are leaving, rooms may not be ready but start on the fun. Pack a swimsuit in carry-on or shed clothes, head to the pool, park or beach. Your hotel will hold luggage. Most hotels rent in-room safes and have hair dryers.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips

www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops

☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

Leaving (so soon?)

Do a room sweep for belongings. As a noon check-out is usual, you might be able to pay a late fee if you have a later flight. Or, pack what you need for the few hours and check bags with the hotel. Don't buy or accept anything suspect that can be taken from you at customs such as plants, meat/animal products, wood with holes or endangered species. Know your limits and exemptions, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html such as on duty free alcohol.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadian citizens: Emergency?

The Consulate General of Canada is in Los Angeles, 213-346-2700. Or contact Global Affairs 1-800-387-3124 or 1-613-996-8885 (collect if needed), sos@international.gc.ca. See <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>.

SO Much TO Do

We're not exaggerating—there are 4,800 wineries: California is the world's 4th top wine producer (\$444 million worth to Canada in 2017). Sonoma www.sonomavalley.com, Napa www.napavalley.com with its revitalized First Street and Paso Robles <https://pasowine.com> are tasty destinations but with more than two dozen wine regions, many hundreds of wineries welcome visitors. With so many special events and wine themed weekends, wine is all over the state. Fantastic restaurants, unique hotels, sybaritic spas and gorgeous drives add up to decadent delightful experiences. Ask your counsellor about wine trips by train. See www.discovercaliforniawines.com/discover-california/wine-map-winery-directory.

Northern California

I left my heart...in San Francisco...one of the best walking cities in the world. A terrific deal is its streetcars (spot the one from Toronto). Tracks take you along two lines (F and E) Embarcadero and into the city for \$2.50 which includes free transfers to the other streetcar and bus lines. The quirky Railway Museum www.streetcar.org/museum across from the Ferry Building is a tiny treasure. **Aquarium of the Bay** at **Fisherman's Wharf** is a respite www.aquariumofthebay.org. **Union Square** is a major shopping area, the square's festivals and special events a good draw; Between those two areas take one of the famous cable cars—turned around by hand www.sfcablecar.com (separate fee from public transit). Ask your counsellor about city tours www.sanfranciscosightseeing.com, **Coit Tower's** panoramic views, **Chinatown** and **Golden Gate Bridge**. Book **Alcatraz** tickets with your counsellor as peak seasons tickets can sell out. The **Ferry Building** has delicious food finds; take a ferry across the bay to the sweet town of **Sausalito**.

Have a rental car? Get out of town north to **Petaluma**, maybe a neat event at **Mystic Theatre** www.mystictheatre.com. **Santa Rosa** is home to Peanuts characters such as Snoopy at the Charles M. Schultz Museum <https://schulzmuseum.org>. Just 20mins north, **Healdsburg** is a mecca for fine wine aficionados, it's central square a draw—AND one of the best specialty libraries anywhere, **Sonoma County Wine Library** in the 139 Piper St. library. **Bodega Bay** was a filming site for The Birds movie—then drive down the iconic **Highway 1** along the coast (to south of Los Angeles if you wish). Love food finds? Find a **Trader Joe's!**

Notable Beaches

Venice Beach, Santa Monica attracts a cast of characters fit for a movie or three. **Laguna Beach** south of LA in town attracts a variety of people including artists and musicians. **Baker Beach, San Francisco:** Between Sea Cliff and Presidio, it draws a mix of families, fishers and yes, nudists who co-exist peacefully. At **Ventura Beach**, south of Santa Barbara you can bring a bottle of wine and picnic, sitting at a picnic table and enjoy dusk like adults.

Southern California.

San Diego: SeaWorld Adventure Park, Zoo, Wild Animal Park: After a wild day shopping in the jungle of a California mall, head for the real thing. **San Diego Zoo** is one of the world's best with natural habitats and top-notch care. It's the closest the kids will get (hopefully) to lions and tigers, with excellent educational info.

Disneyland: See LeGrow's Travel's Inside Scoop: Disneyland www.legrowstravel.ca/uploads/documents/inside-scoops/Disneyland_LT.pdf

Universal Studios: See LeGrow's Travel's Inside Scoop: Universal Studios www.legrowstravel.ca/uploads/documents/inside-scoops/Universal-StudiosHollywood_LT.pdf

LEGOLAND for the kid in us all with its water park and Sea Life Aquarium www.legoland.com/california; **NASA** for budding astronauts www.visitnasa.com/california-science-center-space-shuttle-endeavor; **Knott's Berry Farm** www.knotts.com; **Hearst Castle**, "a museum like no other" <http://hearstcastle.org>.

Plan a Return Visit

WOW we didn't even get to mention walking through **Muir Woods** or **Humboldt Redwoods State Park**, **Capitola** (a small town to watch the surfers) or exploring **Monterey County** and **Carmel**, driving around **Salinas** with vast farmlands and the National (John) Steinbeck Center, **Big Sur**, the calm town of **Ojai** with **Meditation Mount**...You'll just have to plan another visit or three. For more sites, see www.visitcalifornia.com.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don't let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue's local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at 1-888-551-1181. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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