

DISCOVER ONE-TANK Trips

THE FAR WEST

29

CALIFORNIA—CENTRAL

Total mileage / average drive time:
85 miles – 1 hour, 43 minutes

The central coast of California is where you'll find the perfect balance between rural and urban beauty. Dotted with artist enclaves, homes of celebrity residents, and renowned wineries, the area is a place marked with a delicate beauty and pervaded by an air of serenity. It won't take long before you're detoxing from your everyday grind and moving at a slower pace.

THIS ROUTE BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

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1 Santa Barbara

From the border of Oregon to the border of Mexico, the whole breadth of California has pockets of treasures tucked away, and **Santa Barbara**, less than three hours north of Los Angeles on the coast, is one such treasure. This bright, vibrant city has a wonderful relaxed atmosphere you can literally feel from the moment you reach the city limits. Maybe it's the gentle lapping waves



you eye along the shoreline as you drive into the city or downtown's cobblestone streets and the cascading bougainvilleas hanging over the sidewalk cafés that bring an immediate feeling of calm. In Santa Barbara's graceful and mellow town center, you'll find plenty of shops, restaurants, and galleries lining the sidewalks where locals and visitors alike stroll by. There is no hurry here and as soon as you arrive, the need to rush around dissipates instantly. If you want a little break from all this laid-back relaxing, just 24 miles north of Santa Barbara you'll find **El Capitan Beach** where Monarch butterflies return every fall to congregate and breed in the trees, an incredible sight not to be missed if you're lucky enough to come this way in October or November. Outdoor enthusiasts will also find several beach, bluff, and bike trails linking up to this area and, depending on the tide, you can travel up along the coastline from El Capitan to as far as **Coral Canyon Beach**. From there you can join the bluff trails or bike path, which is also open to hikers, for the balance of the trip to **Refugio Beach** — a six-mile round trip. Or, maybe a little wine tour is more your speed. Santa Barbara's regional vineyards have been producing award-

winning wines since the 1970s, and you won't want to leave without sampling a few. The wineries in the area offer many tours, festivals, and special dinners that will help you get in touch with your inner wine connoisseur.

2 Buellton

43.1 miles – 46 minutes

Traveling up the coast and heading inland will bring you to **Buellton**, less than an hour's drive from Santa Barbara. People come from miles around to sample the outrageously thick and delicious split pea soup at **Pea Soup Andersen's**, where the Andersen family began serving its signature soup more than 80 years ago. Allow some time to wander around the restaurant's gift shop, the largest collection of kitsch you're likely to find anywhere! There are several wineries near Buellton worth touring, or you can head back to **Gaviota State Park** on



the coast, a popular spot to spread out a blanket and picnic, swim a bit, or try your hand at some surf fishing.

3 Solvang

3.6 miles – 6 minutes

Head east a short way from Buellton and you'll land in **Solvang** where you'll be transported instantly from the rolling,



oak-studded hills of California to the heart of Denmark. In this charming replica of a **Danish Village**, there are literally dozens of wine tasting rooms, as well as boutiques, art galleries, and a heady variety of restaurants to please your palate. For a quick tour of the town, hop aboard the **Solvang Trolley**, a historic wooden streetcar pulled by a pair of magnificent horses, or take some time to tour a lavender farm or take a horseback ride through this incredible area. Be sure to visit **Mission Santa Inés**, dedicated in 1804 and the 19th of the 21 California Missions established by Franciscan priests over a period of 54 years beginning in 1769. The mission is still an active parish church and houses a rich collection of artifacts, including paintings, statues, and many old manuscripts and vestments. The Mission, lovingly considered a hidden gem by locals and travelers alike, also hosts annual festivals, parades, and horseback riding and cycling events.

4 Santa Ynez
3.8 miles – 8 minutes

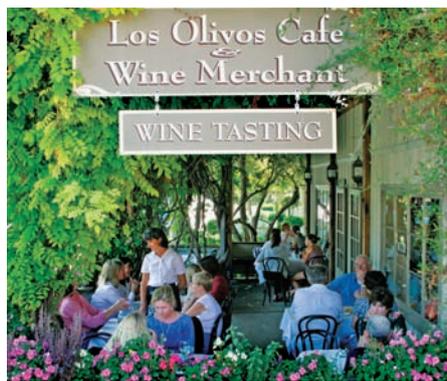
Less than four miles east is **Santa Ynez**, located right in the heart of Santa Barbara **Wine Country**. As charming as it is beautiful, Santa Ynez is one of California's best-kept secrets and a fabulous



place to embark on wine and cycling tours, play a little golf, and immerse yourself in some of the incredible history of the area. Looking for something with a little more excitement? Not far from Santa Ynez, you'll find the **Chumash Casino**. Part resort, part casino, and all fun, you'll have ample opportunities to pamper yourself and see if Lady Luck will smile on you. In addition to gambling, the casino also offers many top entertainers and a **wealth of culinary pleasures** that will have your taste buds thinking you died and went to heaven!

5 Los Olivos
4.6 miles – 9 minutes

From Santa Ynez, head north a few miles to reach your next stop, **Los Olivos**. Wine, wine, and more wine! This is one of the best areas on California's central coast to wine taste, picnic, and soak up the beautiful landscape. After a few wine cellar visits, you'll have enough great local vintages to fill your wine cellar to savor and share for months to come.



6 Santa Maria
30 miles – 34 minutes

Your last stop is **Santa Maria**, a little over half an hour north of Los Olivos. Award-winning wineries, championship golf courses, and some of the region's most incredible scenery surround the city of Santa Maria. Ready for a break from all that wine tasting? Pay a visit to the **Museum of Flight**, which houses many fascinating exhibits, including memorabilia from the movie, *The Rocketeer*, and the aircraft from the movie, *Flight of the Phoenix*, as well as scale models of one of NASA's space shuttle crafts and the current space station, and a display case containing fragments of the ill-fated *Challenger*. Also visit the Museum's huge library to peruse its substantial collection of books on flight and stop at the Museum's cafe to grab a bite to eat before heading out.

