

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.



Surf's up! Santa Cruz, California, the birthplace of mainland surfing welcomes visitors to the quintessential beach town. From old growth coastal redwood forests, to a legendary 100-year old seaside amusement park overlooking the sparkling blue Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz County offers the classic California beach vacation.

LOCATION

Santa Cruz is approximately 70 miles/113 km south of San Francisco and 349 miles/562 km north of Los Angeles. Many visitors choose to take scenic Highway 1 along the California coastline to Santa Cruz or Highway 17 from Silicon Valley and San Jose through the Santa Cruz Mountains. Visitors can also choose to fly in to San Francisco International Airport or Mineta-San Jose International Airport.

CLIMATE

- Mild, with summer temperatures in the mid-70s and winter temperatures in the mid-50s.
- The sun shines 300 days a year and the humidity is low for a coastal city.

HIGHWAY 1

- Highway 1 is the most famous scenic drive in California, and this legendary highway passes straight through Santa Cruz County. Starting out in northern Santa Cruz County, you'll experience rugged coastal vistas and the former whaling town of Davenport. As you come into Santa Cruz, you'll pass wineries, Mission Santa Cruz and the Downtown Area. South of Santa Cruz, are the picturesque towns of Capitola, Soquel, and Aptos. Further south, you'll pass agricultural fields through Watsonville and Elkhorn Slough, famous for bird watching.

ATTRACTIONS

- The legendary Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, built in 1907, is home to the Giant Dipper, a vintage

wooden roller coaster that has thrilled visitors for over 85 years. Seventy-three hand-carved horses prance proudly to the music from two beautiful antiques: the park's original 342-pipe Ruth band organ and Wurlitzer 165 band organ at the famous Looft Carousel, built in 1911. Both the Giant Dipper and the Looft Carousel are National Historic Landmarks.

- In the Santa Cruz Mountains, Roaring Camp Railroads hosts visitors on nostalgic rides through the redwoods aboard vintage steam locomotives. Roaring Camp also hosts annual celebrations like the Civil War Reenactments, which take place Memorial Day Weekend.
- Other attractions in Santa Cruz County include an aquarium, museums and galleries, farmer's markets and more.

SURFING

- Santa Cruz is the birthplace of mainland surfing in the United States, and was brought to the area in 1885 when three Hawaiian princes rode the waves here on surfboards crafted from redwood trees.
- Late wetsuit pioneer Jack O'Neill called Santa Cruz home, and the site of his original surf shop is a California Point of Historical Interest.
- Santa Cruz is one of the best places in the U.S. to learn to surf. Surf schools host group and individual lessons, taught by patient and encouraging instructors.
- The Santa Cruz Surfing Museum - housed inside a brick lighthouse - chronicles over 100 years of

local surfing history and overlooks Steamer Lane, one of the best places in the country to surf.

STATE PARKS

- Santa Cruz County is home to the largest number of state parks and beaches than any other county in California - 14 in all - including California's oldest, Big Basin Redwoods State Park.
- State Parks in Santa Cruz County offer visitors a vast amount of diverse landscapes, from the mountains to the sea, all within a small area.
- State Parks in Santa Cruz County host an amazing number of free events year round for visitors, and volunteer docents are available to host visitors on walks through the parks.

WINE REGION

- Home to more than 70 wineries, 200 small vineyards and 1,500 acres of wine grapes.
- Tasting tours, picnic spots, winemaker dinners, and special events are all part of the experience.
- The wineries of the Santa Cruz Mountains offer an intimate experience for visitors. Often times, the winemaker who makes wine during the week is pouring wine in the tasting room on the weekends, enabling visitors to have a one-on-one experience with local winemakers.
- The Corralitos Wine Trail near Watsonville, the wineries of the Santa Cruz Mountains, and Surf City Vintners on Santa Cruz's Westside are just a few places to taste.
- Bargetto Winery is Santa Cruz County's oldest winery, located in picturesque Soquel.