

# Tried and True Moms' Travel Guide

## Central Coast California to Northern California

### Los Angeles

**Bay Cities Deli**-Get the Godmother sandwich with the works. Grab a number when you walk in, the line moves fast. Shop the unique imported items while you wait. Get a slice of Their unforgettable tiramisu and a loaf of bread to go. Also a side of Italian dipping sauce for your sandwich. You'll be dreaming about this sub for weeks afterwards.

**Santa Monica Promenade** for shopping, Santa Monica pier and beach for older kids and teenagers. There is a ferris wheel, roller coaster and games at the end of they pier. Venice beach is also fun for kids and older kids. Lots of street vendors and street performers. Fun place to collect souvenirs or trinkets.

**Griffith Observatory and Griffith park** Free-Beautiful views, planetarium.

**The Getty Center** Free-Lovely views, art from various ages and nations.

**The Grove**- Shopping and food

**Rodeo Drive**-High end shopping, French macaroons from Laduree. Then drive up rodeo right into Beverly Hills with your windows down, and music up. Admire the unique and fancy homes, you can even google the addresses and see which celebrities live in them. Stop for lunch or a walk to the pastry shop at the famous beverly hills hotel. If you have time you can take a Hollywood celebrities bus tour.

**La Brea Tar Pits**-Fun place for kids to see the tar pits that have been bubbling for more than 40,000 years. Tar pits are free but the fossil museum costs \$15 an adult and less for child pricing.

**Dodger Stadium**-Gets a dodger dog and watch a game at the iconic and nostalgic stadium.

**Diddy Reise Cookies**-Closed Monday and Tuesday. Made from scratch and baked daily. Cookies are only .50 each and you can make any ice cream sandwich combination.

### Malibu

**Solstice Canyon hike**- 3 miles round trip. Easy paved road great for a stroller and kids. Dec-June there should be an active waterfall at the end. Google the history of the canyon and you will see remnants of the old Hollywood home at the end that was burned down. You can still see the tile floor and swimming pool outside.

**Grotto Trail hike**-relatively easy 3 mile round trip hike that leads to a grotto and waterfall at the end. My three year old can do it but needs help climbing down the rocks to the grotto.

**El Matador State Beach** is full of unique caves and rock formations. It is busy so get there early for parking. Great place for photos and to admire ocean life at low tide.

**Malibu Pier** is fun to walk on. Definitely eat at **Malibu Farm** on the pier and get the streetlight taco trio. Under the you can rent a paddle board and paddle around the small pier. Fun for kids and adults

**Malibu Village** has great outdoor shopping and places to eat. **Real Coconut Kitchen** is a great lunch spot for a salad or healthy bite. It is right next to a **Whole Foods** and all of the stores. Stop at **Free People** and get my favorite Surf perfume \$28 to remember your day in Malibu.

-**Neptunes Net** is an iconic Malibu stop for fish tacos. **Drive up the 101** and admire the lovely sunny coastline.

-**Leo Carrillo**- One of my most favorite beaches for tide pools and surfing. Kids will love spending the day here exploring and playing in the sand. Great spot for family photos too.

-**Thornhill Broome State Beach** is a fun place to park and have a picnic or bonfire at the beach. It is near the giant sandhill on the PCH that is so fun to let your kids and family play on. We usually bring boogie boards and surf down the hill. Also bring dinner around the time the sun is setting for a lovely view.

**Point Mugu** is a great spot to stop and watch the waves, there is usually a fruit stand set up there and you can get a fresh cut variety sprinkled with fresh squeezed lime and tajin. So good!

## Camarillo

**Waypoint Café**- Not far from point Mugu is a famous little restaurant at the airport, "Waypoint Café" – eat next to the run way and watch the planes land and take off. You might see a few famous people there like Harrison Ford who flies in often for lunch. Food is delicious and the atmosphere reminds me of the Disney movie Planes.

**Camarillo outlets**- Camarillo is 10 miles to the beach, and has great shopping at the Camarillo outlets. A few of my favorite stores are Lululemon, cotton on kids, Ugg, Vans, Converse, Nike, and North Face.

**Rolling Pin donuts**- If you are in Camarillo in the evening, make sure to hit up Rolling Pin donuts for a hot fresh donut. They usually start baking (you can watch through the window) at 6pm and they are open all through the night. There is usually a long line, but it moves quick. My favorite is the cronut donut, (croissant donut) Old fashioned, and buttermilk bar.

## Oxnard

**Silverstrand** is a great beach for families and surfing. We love getting Mexican food from **Pepe's** and eating it on the beach. You will see many boats coming and going from the harbor. **Channel Islands harbor** is fun to walk around and even more fun if you take a whale watching

tour, or boat out to one of the Channel Islands. -**Island Packers** 805-642-1393 can give you pricing for a day trip. If you have an hour to spend in the harbor, rent an electric boat from **Hopper boat rental** 805-382-1100. They are so easy to drive and your kids will love feeling like pirates cruising around seeing sea lions, boats and unique homes on the water.

**Fresh strawberry fruit stands** On your way out, stop at the fresh strawberry fruit stands. They are vine ripened, grown yearly and are the best in the world!

**Oxnard shores** is a good surf spot

## Ventura

**Walk the pier.** There is a great **taco hut** on the pier – then walk the boardwalk along the beach.

**Betty Belts** is one of my favorite stores. Go get a sea glass ring or necklace and admire all the jewelry. The store is so lovely. Make sure to tell the owner Donna hello. She can tell you the best surf spots and secret local places to eat.

**Flea market** is every Wednesday morning. It is full of treasures, people watching, and random finds. You never know what deal of the day you will find, but I always find at least one thing. Admission is \$2 a person. It is next to **C street surf spot** so walk over there and check out a well known surf break.

**Downtown Ventura** - Drive over the freeway to the cute downtown with shopping and restaurants. **Natures grill, Blenders, Nick the Greek**, for lunch and all the restaurants for dinner are great! **Rumfish** is kind of secluded spot and you can eat next to a fire under lemon trees. Drive up 5 minutes to **The Cross**, parking is free and you can walk around the garden to see a panoramic view of Ventura. Fun place for kids to get some energy out.

**Maritime museum** at the **Ventura Harbor** is free and fun for kids to walk around for 30 minutes. Walk up the dock and go to the shops and restaurants. **Coastal Cone** is a fun stop for kids.

**Mothers Beach** is a safe beach for babies as it is protected and has no waves. (**Harbor cove beach** is the name of it)

**Surfing spots** in Ventura-C Street, Ventura point, The Jetty at Ventura harbor,

**Marina park** is fun for kids and there is a huge pirate ship to play on

**Mondos** is a great family beach and one of our favorite places to surf as a family

## Ojai

About 20 minutes from the beach is a little town called Ojai. It is the original home of Johnny Cash and is full of charm. Great place to stay or spend an afternoon at.

Places to eat-**Papa Lennons** for an artisan pizza and salad. **Farmer in the Cook** for a very healthy warm meal. **Ojai Deer Lodge** or **Boccoli's**

Stores to visit-**Caravan outpost** (you can also stay here) **Summer camp, In the Field, Dekor & Co, Yes Ma, Harry-Jewelry**, and make sure to visit the open air **Barts Books Library**.

-Places to stay, **Caravan outpost, Chantico Inn, Ojai Valley Inn** (famous for its spa), **Blue and Emerald Iguana Inn**,

Things to do: **Farmer's market** on Sunday. **Libbey park**- rent bikes and bike the path. **Skatepark downtown**, Hike horse back riding with your kids at the **Ojai Valley Trail riding** company.

**Rose Valley falls** is a stunning 5 minute hike to a waterfall. In the winter there is snow and during January-April the rolling hills are green and you will be driving in the clouds.

**Ojai olive oil co** is a fun stop to taste test olive oil.

**Ojai valley trail** is 9 miles and is perfect for strollers, biking, running, or horses.

## Summerland

28 miles from Ventura

**"The Sacred Space"** -Make a short stop to visit- its Free 2495 Lillie Ave, Summerland, open 11-5 A beautiful store that serves free tea as you relax in their gardens! Sunset magazine calls it "a mix of spiritual journey and exotic vacation.... Buddhist statues and Tibetan altar pieces give it the quality of a temple. Meditation pavilions and Lily ponds make the sunken back garden feel like Bali. Worth the stop! Perfect place for a girls trip, make sure to leave a tip for good karma.

## Montecito

3 miles from Summerland

**Lotusland** – 37 acre estate of gardens created by an opera singer between 1920-1940. Listed in top 10 gardens to see in country. Closed Mon - Tues, open 10-1:30 Wed - Sat, cost \$45

**Biltmore Hotel** Love having lunch on the patio of the Biltmore Hotel – right across from the ocean! Upscale hotel with beautiful Spanish architecture - lunch is reasonably priced

**Butterfly Beach** here is a great place for sea glass hunting. Go all the way down the beach to the rocks at low tide and start digging.

**Bettina**-is a great dinner spot for artisan pizzas and salads. My husband and I love eating here for date night. Keep your eye out for Prince Harry and Princess Megan.

**Rosewood Miramar Beach and Hotel** is a showstopper. Great place for an anniversary dinner or girls birthday dinner. The grounds are stunning, and the Food from Malibu Farm are delicious.

## Santa Barbara

9 miles from Montecito, 43 miles from Camarillo (one of my favorite places to go!)

**Pier**- Drive out on the pier for great photo ops, souvenir shops and restaurants. There is a fun inexpensive **aquarium** on the pier and the kids will love going through it. Free parking for two hours on the pier.

**Downtown SB** is a fun place to eat and shop. Park in the underground parking under the mall.

**Take the trolley** around Santa Barbara – visit **Old Mission Santa Barbara** and the **Natural History Museum** with your kids.

**Hendrys** on the beach is a favorite place for breakfast and brunch.

**Condor Express Whale watching tour** was one of the best experiences of my life.

805-882-0088 The boat is so beautiful, you are guaranteed to see whales and hundreds of dolphins. The boat owner and staff are locals who will educate you on the marine life and everything you see.

-**Kids World** is the funnest park. Giant wood structures they can run around on. Bathrooms, and a succulent garden across the street. On Saturdays and Sundays a magician sets up for free and puts on a show several times a day.

-**Lucky Penny, Pickle and Swiss**, and **East Beach Tacos** for more food options

## Solvang

35 miles from Santa Barbara

Solvang is a Danish town, fun place to drive through and take photos. Pastries are great, try the traditional eibleskivers, If you have kids there is an **ostrich farm** and a **miniature pony farm** right outside Solvang.

**Cold Springs Tavern** is an unforgettable stagecoach stop for food and dining. Tucked away in the winding hillside, it feels like a flashback in time for a tiresome traveler.

## Los Alamos

17 miles from Solvang

This is a tiny one street town with an amazing farm to table restaurant "**Bell Street Farm**". We eat lunch there every time we go up the coast - 406 Bell Street, Los Alamos 805-344-4609. It is next door to an original restored saloon / hotel.

**Antique stores** are across the street.

## Pismo Beach

– 37 miles from Los Alamos or 54 miles from Solvang

**Walk the pier**- Walk the famous pier and visit beach shops. There is a fun playground on the pier and we loved staying at the **Vespara hotel**. Ocean views, parking, pool and hot tub were well worth the price and convenience.

**Pismo Rock** is by the marina. Park in the free parking lot and walk the beach where you can find lots of sand dollars in the spring.

**Monarch Butterfly Grove**- visit between late March through February to see 1000's of butterflies Address: 400 S Dolliver St, Pismo Beach, CA 93449, Hours: Open 24 hours, 805.773.7170

**Pismo Beach Sand dunes** are so fun to drive on. Go at low tide if you do not have four wheel drive. You can camp on this beach and also rent dune buggy's to ride around on. During the winter months you will for sure find sand dollars on this beach.

**Old West Cinnamon Rolls** Bakes fresh daily. The streets smell like hot sweet cinnamon every morning. **Surfside donuts** is also great for breakfast.

**Splash Cafe** is famous for its clam chowder in a sour dough bread bowl.

## Shell Beach

2.5 miles – take exit 191B from Pismo Beach

A tiny beach town that is one of our favorite stops and is a great place for photos. Best time to go is during low tide - all of the long tide pools are exposed. Park along the coast, take stairs down to the beach, check out the tide pools, relax in the private cove, sift through the pebble sand where you can find tons of shells, sea glass, jade and agate. You won't want to leave. Also, if you have a metal detector, sometimes nuggets of gold wash up and are found in the sound wedged under large rocks facing the beach.

## Avila beach

7 miles (a couple of miles off of the 1 hwy)

Walk the pier, visit the private stunning bay, rent some kayaks and kayak the bay. My 7 year old and I spent one hour kayaking to the point san luis lighthouse and saw so many sea otters bobbing in the ocean. The water was aqua blue and the tiny hike to the lighthouse was worth the adventure. It was so beautiful and there was a large swing from an eucalyptus tree that has you feeling like you are swinging in the sky above the sea.

## San Luis Obispo

10 miles from Shell Beach

Love this pretty college town. Down town is a great place to eat lunch - favorite place to eat is **Novo** on Higuera street in downtown. It hangs over the creek that runs through town and has amazing food.

Great shopping, also **bubble gum alley** for photos is downtown, great **farmers market** on Thursday nights where they close off the downtown and have lots of great food and entertainment.

**Madonna Inn** is a nostalgic stop that has been around for decades. This Pink hotel has pink carpet, flowers, themed rooms and was a destination spot for many honeymooners. You can still stop and visit for an unforgettable pink dinner experience and pink champagne cake. The bathrooms are pink and known for the mens waterfall. Ive never stayed there, but the rooms are affordable and seem fun. I did buy a pink madonna robe from the gift shop that is the same print as the carpet.

## Morro Bay

From San Luis Obispo, take hwy 1 over to the coastal route (not 101 north)

**Morro Bay Rock** is a giant Volcanic rock that looks like it is floating in the ocean, Every time we bring our kids to this beach we find sea jellies, sea pickles, and sand dollars. Waves have a rip tide so be safe. We like to eat at **-Dutchmans** on the water, great food and view of the rock.

**The Shell Shop** has been there since I was a child. It is so fun to stop at and admire all the shells from all over the world. Let your kids pick one out to remember the trip. I still remember going there as a little girl.

## Cayucos

19 miles – from San Luis Obispo - walk the pier

Small beach town is the half way point from Los Angeles and San Francisco, make sure you stop at the famous **Brown Sugar Cookie Company** - they give free samples, make them right in front of you, are \$\$\$, but worth it. It's a must stop for me!

There are lots of **antique shops** along the short, main street.

**Fun skatepark** for kids right by the beach. The **Cayucos Gas Mini Mart** has a great taco shop, get carne asada tacos and a breakfast burrito to eat at the beach. There is also a **playground on the beach** my kids love to play at.

## Harmony

9 miles from Cayucos

15 minute stop in to see the **glass blowing** artists and their gift shops. You can also schedule ahead a glass blowing class individually, or with a group, where you all glass blow a vase or bowl. Sometimes sell great ice cream from a cart.

## Cambria

5 miles from Harmony or 14 miles from Cayucos

Cambria is famous for beautiful **moonstone beach**, moonstones are white opalescent stones that you can find in the sand.

Love staying in the **hotels on Moonstone Beach** with their fireplaces and walking across the street to the beach.

The town of Cambria is on the opposite side of the freeway - make sure you drive through the 2 different sections of town. It has little shops and restaurants. Their most famous restaurant is **Linn's** (not kidding) where they sell a lemon salt that is really good. Make sure to visit the gift shops behind the restaurant.

There is a really quirky house called **Nit Wit Ridge** made out of found objects. You can take a tour with the eccentric owner or just drive by and take pictures.

## San Simeon

10 miles from Cambria

**Hearst Castle** is amazing and worth the tour. You need to reserve tickets ahead of time. My favorite tour is the evening tour where actors dress up in the clothing from that time era and recreate scenes from the past. You can also buy food/salads at the tour bldg. Look for the **wild zebras** on the side of the hwy before hitting Hearst Castle entrance. They used to belong to William Hearst's personal zoo, but were let free to roam. Decades later, they are still thriving.

We have stayed in (**San Simeon Lodge, Courtesy Inn, and Sea Breeze Inn**. All 3 are low budget but fine to stay in. (2 double beds, \$59-\$69). If you want to spend time in Big Sur this is the last stop for affordable hotels.

**San Simeon elephant seals** - 4 miles from San Simeon / Hearst Castle exit. You will see a sign that says viewing sight for elephant seals - amazing - sometimes there are 100's of elephant seals with their pups - worth pulling over for. Kids love it. The males make the loudest barking sound and it is unforgettable watching them fight over their harem. We usually stay for an hour walking the trails and eating breakfast off the back of our car.

## South Big Sur

16 miles from San Simeon

1<sup>st</sup> stop **Ragged Point** – great stop for a meal, bathrooms, and photos– especially breakfast if you stayed over in San Simeon the night before. Eat at **The Restaurant at Ragged Point**. They have a great breakfast you can eat on the back patio overlooking the ocean. Take a walk, enjoy the amazing views from 350' cliffs, hike down the steep cliffside trail to a remote cove, great photo op, meals & treats. We stayed in Ragged Point hotel and each room has a fireplace. Wake up early to take in the views and smells of Big Sur. There is no reception but each room has a landline phone. Make sure you get a map of Big Sur here as you will not have Mapquest in your car through Big Sur. The map will help you so you don't miss the important stops.

## McWay Falls

– 58 miles from Ragged Point

12 miles south of Big Sur Village is McWay Falls, one of the most spectacular places anywhere in Big Sur. The falls drop 80 feet onto the beach or tide. There is a hike out to a view point but it can also be seen from the road just before **Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park**.

## Big Sur Village

86 miles from San Simeon, 73 miles from McWay Falls

Shops, hotels, camping, hiking, eats

Eat at **Lucia Lodge restaurant** – cliff-side restaurant overlooking the ocean in the heart of Big Sur. Lunch/ dinner. Lunch - 11 AM - 4:30 PM. Dinner - 5 PM, 62400 CA-1, Big Sur, (866) 424-4787

Eat at **Big Sur River Inn** – historic dining room and deck built by the original homesteaders. Cool your feet in the Adirondack chairs in the river. 46800 Highway One, Big Sur 800.548.3610

**Nepenthe Restaurant** along Big Sur, open air, unique and stunning views.

**Point Sur** is a National Historic Landmark, one of the only complete turn-of-the-century light stations Open to the public. Walking tours are available on Wednesdays and weekends.

Supposedly one of the most haunted places in America, with great views

## North Big Sur



**Point Lobos National Park** is a must stop - **Weston beach** at low tide is full of Starfish, sea urchins and tide pools. Get there early for parking \$10. Definitely take the short easy hike around bird island trail. You might even see the once endangered California Condor. There are so many birds, coves and stunning views of the coastline and wildlife. Stay on trail and keep an eye on your kids, there are big drops. Park opens at 8:30 am. Trail leads you to **Gibson Beach** which is isolated by caves. The water is aqua blue on a sunny day and protected so your kids will have a blast. Bring wetsuits, the water is cold.

**Whalers cove** is fun for a little history lesson and is on your way out of the park. There is an old whalers house that will teach you what types of whales live near and were previously hunted in the cove.

## Carmel

55 miles from Big Sur

This artsy town was built in 1902 by musicians, artists and dreamers. None of the homes have addresses, but rather names. The **Comstock Fairy houses** built in the 1920's are still there. You can take an audio tour or get a map from the visitors center and walk around admiring them. Then stop at one of his houses which was turned into a cafe. It is called the **Tuck Box**. Make sure you drive along **Carmel-by-the-Sea's Scenic Road** - to catch it from CA-1, head west on Ocean Ave and then turn left on Scenic Road, where you will drive along the coastline past Carmel river state beach and Carmel city beach. We stayed at the **Comfort Inn** which was reasonably priced and only a block from the downtown where there is lots of expensive shopping, lots of art galleries and great restaurants. We ate a great meal at a great Greek restaurant, **Dametra Café**, with live music. It is also fun to drive through neighborhoods to see all the cottage homes.

From Carmel you can get back on HWY 1 to Monterey. Or take the "17 mile drive" to Monterey, which they claim it is one of the most beautiful drives in the country, along the beach. Lots of photos ops. **Pebble beach** is beautiful and there is a visitors center at the Famous Golf course with clean bathrooms and snacks. The drive costs \$10 and ends up just south of Cannery Row where the Monterey Bay Aquarium is located.

## Monterey

20 miles from Carmel

**Monterey Bay Aquarium** - \$30.00 adult \$20.00 kid \$2.00 off with AAA - 886 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA Phone: 831-648-4888, 10am-6pm daily

**Cannery Row**- visit for great sea food and tourist shops or at least drive through it to see the old historic Monterey.

**Dennis the Menace park** is a great stop for kids. The park is not built up to code so make sure to watch your kids. You could easily spend an hour there.

**First Awakenings** in Monterey is great for breakfast/brunch. Get the Wheatberry pancake and eggs Benedict. Then walk over to the **Pendleton outlet store** for a great deal on some wool blankets.

**Asilomar Beach** in Pacific Grove is great for tide pools and beach walks.

**Lovers Point** for photos, and to see lots of squirrels and sometimes sea lions.

**Point Dume** is fun to play on the dunes, bring a boogie board or kite. Jan-April be on the lookout for whales

## Santa Cruz

43 miles from Santa Cruz

Fun beach town w/ entertaining boardwalk, roller coaster rides, free concerts, arcades, and the pier.

We did the **boardwalk** in late afternoon, rode the sky cabs the length of the boardwalk, then watched the sun set at the beach.

If you want to stay near the boardwalk for kids, we stayed at the **Comfort Inn** that is about 2 blocks from the boardwalk. It is reasonably priced, has free breakfast and is a quick walk to the boardwalk. (that part of town is a little sketchy though)

**Downtown Santa Cruz** is about a 10 minute drive from the boardwalk where there is lots of shopping and great places to eat.

**Sea cliff state beach** to see the cement ship then to **Marianne's Ice cream**.

**Capitola state beach** is a great place to camp and spend the day at the beach. **Capitola** is a lovely little town to get pizza at and buy a Santa Cruz sweater from one of the fun surf shops.

**Betty Burgers** for lunch is a fun stop

## Felton

7 miles from Santa Cruz

I would suggest you take a small detour and spend part of your day in the town of Felton, A small, cute town located in the redwood forest in the Santa Cruz mountains. There is a re-creation of an **1880's logging town** and a **one-hour open-top train ride through the redwood forest** with 1880 steam engines. There are also **hikes** through the forest, the **Red Caboose Restaurant, General Store, panning for gold**, etc. in the summer.

If you want to ride the train it is located at **Roaring Camp** and I would suggest reserving your tickets ahead of time. There is parking at the train but for the same price (10) you can park at the Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park which is a closer walk to the train than the train parking lot is. Either before or after the train ride spend an hour or two walking the trails through the huge redwoods at the State Park. There are also longer hiking trails that leave from there.

If you are intrigued by **Bigfoot**, they claim it roams that forest and they have a small **Bigfoot museum** there – crazy!

**Mystery Spot California Attraction**- Also about 10 minutes away is the Mystery Spot California Attraction - A crazy gravitational anomaly in the redwood forest nearby. Discovered in 1939 by surveyors, it has become an international attraction that takes you beyond the laws of physics. 74 River Street, Suite 209, Santa Cruz, : 10am-4pm; Sun: 10am-5pm; Sat: 10am-5pm, \$5.00, I would suggest you reserve tickets ahead of time.

*(This was our timing for the day: We pre-booked our train tickets ahead of time. We left Santa Cruz at 9, arrived in Felton at 9:30, and walked the trails through the redwoods until 10:30.*

Walked 5 minutes to the train station and boarded the 11 am train. We returned to the station at 12:15, spent a little time in the General Store, grabbed a snack and returned to the state Park where we spent about an hour and a half walking through the redwoods again. Absolutely beautiful! We were finished there at 2. If you want to see the bigfoot museum and go to the Mystery house I would go through the museum and have already prebooked tickets for the Mystery house for the latest tour. It is about 10 minutes away)

## San Francisco

80 miles from Felton

**Alcatraz**-The prison on an island famous for locking up the most dangerous criminals. It is now a state park and if you have a fourth grader you can visit for free with the fourth grade park pass. Buy tickets in advance online. Ages 6 and up should love it. Get the audio headset to listen to actual inmates talk about their time there.

**Coit Tower**- 360 views of the skyline and San Francisco City. Elevator to the top costs a few dollars and was worth it.

**Mama's** is within walking distance from Coit Tower and is a great place for breakfast and lunch. Get the Monte Cristo.

**Lombard Street** is fun to see and drive down. Your uber driver will even do it if you don't have a car.

**Tony's pizza** is a great stop for a quick lunch. It is rated one of the best pizza stops in the US

**House of Prime** is Sissy/s favorite dinner spot. Lots of food! Steaming hot sour dough, and make sure to get the salad that they make at your table. If there is a wait, go to the cute boutiques around the corner. One store was called **Picnic**.

**The Stinking Rose** is a fun place for dinner. Great Italian food with lots of garlic.

**Bobs Donuts** is a local favorite and the donuts were delicious. Pick up a few for breakfast the next day.

**Farm Table** was a great stop for a quick healthy breakfast and or lunch. Loved every bite and felt so good after. I had the egg on croissant and Brussel sprout salad.

**Rent bikes** around the wharf and bike along the ocean then over the golden gate bridge in to Sausalito. Go to the **dynamic crystals rock shop**, some art galleries, candy store, & have lunch over the water. From here you can take the ferry back to the wharf for around \$8

**Fishermans wharf** is a great stop for a sour dough bread bowl from **Boudin Bakery**. Buy an animal shaped loaf as a souvenir. The pier usually has barking sea lions and mini hot fresh donuts made all day long.

**Golden Gate Bridge** is so pretty and you can park right by Fort Point and go in the old masonry building and the gift shop. There is a good surf spot at this point in the winter months. This is also a good spot to get a good photo of the bridge. The bridge is free to drive over but coming back it costs \$9 toll which you will pay online.

**La Taqueria** is busy and delicious. Line moves fast and the food is inexpensive. We had Carne asada and chicken tacos.

**B patisserie** is a great stop for breakfast. Loved the Kouign Amann!

**China town** is fun for souvenirs and trinkets, the **Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory** is fun to watch them make cookies. You can even write your own fortunes and put them inside.

## Mendocino

Make sure you drive to Mendocino in the daytime, the views through the redwoods are dreamy and enchanting. You will be driving under a canopy of greenery through windy and foggy roads without reception so it could be dangerous if you broke down or hit a deer.

**Glamping in Mendocino Grove** is unforgettable. Cozy accommodations in the redwoods. Call 707-880-7710 for pricing and dates they operate. Each tent has heated mattress pads, down comforters and the crisp smell of the redwoods. Family and dog friendly with nice bathrooms, showers tea/coffee all day and fruit yogurt bowls for breakfast. Each spot has a grill and some tents are couples only with ocean views. On site sauna and hiking trails as well.

**Big River-** Such a fun beach to play at with your kids. Catch a canoe rental store will help you rent a paddle board or kayak to play around on the glassy river. Keep an eye out for driftwood and seaglass to take home.

**Point Cabrillo Lighthouse-** about mile and a half round trip walk. Beautiful views and museum at the end. You can even stay at the hold lighthouse keepers quarters as a bed and breakfast. [www.pointcabrillo.org](http://www.pointcabrillo.org) to learn more

**Downtown Mendocino** has beautiful old historic victorian homes and shops that are only open in the day time. **Frankies pizza** was delicious and also serves the local favorite **Cowlicks** handmade ice cream.

If you are hiking near the redwoods on one of the trails, keep an eye out for fresh raspberries in the summer, they were everywhere

## Fort Bragg

**Sea Glass beach** is even prettier than expected. Fort Bragg has the most sea glass in the world thanks to the wave patterns that keep everything on the beach. The sea glass didn't wash up, but rather it never left. This area is a giant rock tumbler and there are several dump sites. I made sure to go at low tide when most of the sea glass was be visible. There are several coves that are located near the old city dump so you might want to get a map from the sea glass Museum.

Next to The sea glass museum is **Cowlicks ice cream** and the **skunk train**. There is also a **mini model train display** open in the morning till 2 pm that kids will love to look at. The skunk train was so much fun and the whole thing only took an hour. The train takes you into the redwoods, stops for twenty minutes and lets you walk around and explore before blowing the loud whistle to let you know its heading back. Dogs are welcome and there are bathrooms and snacks on the train.

**f** for a quick tour about logging and the history of this little town. It is within walking distance from the skunk train.