

Carmel-by-the-Sea “Tops” for Outdoor Recreation

With apologies to David Letterman, innkeepers in Carmel-by-the-Sea have compiled their own Top Ten list of visitors' favorite outings in the village. No surprise, all the selections combine exercise and a healthy lifestyle with a big dose of fun.

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#10 – Hang Gliding –Visitors get a different perspective of the Monterey Peninsula when hang gliding. Whether participating or spectating, Marina State Beach – about a 20-minute drive north of Carmel – is the perfect spot for either launching or watching.

#9 – Horseback Riding – There are several options for horseback riding, including Molera Horseback Tours at Molera State Park, 22 miles south of Carmel in Big Sur.

#8 – Whale Watching – No matter the time of year, whale-watchers are rarely disappointed when cruising with a number of companies operating out of nearby Monterey Bay. Dolphins are often spotted, too, making the trips even more breathtaking.

#7 – In/On the Ocean: There is no end to the Pacific Ocean options: scuba diving, deep sea fishing, sailing, stand-up paddling, surfing, kayaking, and more.

#6 – Spa: If it's wellness visitors seek, a visit to one of the area's day spas will answer the call. There are several first-class options in Carmel, with others in nearby Pebble Beach and Carmel Valley.

#5 – Running: For the 29th consecutive year, Carmel just served as the finish line for the Big Sur Marathon, one of the world's most popular long-distance running events. Visitors looking to log shorter runs are partial to the course that winds down Ocean Avenue, along Scenic Road, and includes an end-to-end jaunt on the white sands of Carmel Beach. Other popular routes go through Monterey and Pacific Grove. The Big Sur Half Marathon on Monterey Bay is held in November.

#4 – Biking: One of the best ways to experience the Monterey Peninsula is on two wheels. The ride along Carmel Beach is always a favorite, but 17-Mile Drive in Pebble Beach or the Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail need not take backseats. Visitors can bring their own bikes or rent them in town, while some lodging properties conveniently have them on hand for their guests' use.

#3 – Golf: Pebble Beach Golf Links, Spyglass Hill, Poppy Hills ... it's hard to beat the Monterey Peninsula for world-class golf. And there's Rancho Cañada Golf Club, just east of downtown Carmel, and the Pacific Grove Golf Links. Golfers will find numerous reasons to extend their trip.

#2 – Hiking: Head in any direction for outstanding hikes. Among the favorites are Point Lobos State Reserve, two miles south of Carmel on Highway 1; Garrapata State Park, a few miles further south on Highway 1; Big Sur (select from Andrew Molera State Park, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park or Julie Pfeiffer Burns State Park for exceptional day hikes); and Garland Ranch Regional Park in Carmel Valley, eight miles east of Carmel on Carmel Valley Road.

... And the No. 1 favorite outing for guests in Carmel-by-the-Sea is Walking. Innkeepers tell countless tales of guests recounting their wonderful jaunts through the village's downtown, discovering hidden courtyards and alleyways, touring historic homes and cottages or strolling down to Carmel Beach. [Gael Gallagher's Carmel Walks](#), [Carmel Wine Walk by-the-Sea](#) and [Carmel Food Tour](#) are other great ways to explore the scenic village by foot.

The top-10 Carmel experiences—and countless others guests discover on their own—have never been closer. Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) is just a 10-minute drive from downtown Carmel, and has recently added direct flights to and from San Diego. Other direct flight routes include San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Denver, and Phoenix.

The newly formed Carmel Hospitality Improvement District – a joint organization of the City of Carmel, Carmel Chamber of Commerce and Carmel Innkeepers Association – is working to promote the village's abundant attractions, events, and stunning seaside location. From its incomparable white-sand beach to many choices of distinctive meeting venues and lodging properties, Carmel-by-the-Sea has it all. For more information about how to get the most out of a trip to Carmel-by-the-Sea, visit <http://www.carmelcalifornia.com> and <http://www.carmelcalifornia.org>, the Carmel Chamber of Commerce's website.

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Contact

Karen Moraghan
[Hunter Public Relations Special Events](#)
 +1 (908) 876-5100
[Email](#)

@hunterpublic
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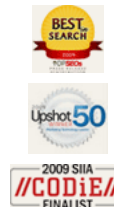
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