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Carmel-By-The-Sea: Beat The Heat!

By Patrick Witz
Staff Writer

With 100-degree weather threatening my foothill hometown, I asked the sweaty image in the mirror for some advice on how to beat the heat... he replied, "Go west young man. Go west!" So...I did! In the California San Joaquin Valley cities like Bakersfield, Fresno, Visalia, Merced, Modesto, and north from Sacramento to Redding, summer time temperatures can soar well into the mid-nineties and many times above 110°F (45°C). That heat is just as unbearable throughout the Gold Country Sierra Mountain foothill towns. Beat the heat – take a short vacation to the nearest beach. It's a relatively short three to five hour drive and immediately upon cresting the California Coastal Mountain range the temperatures nose dive into sweater weather.



Before going west, I made a list of questions and answers prior to my internet investigation:

- 1) What do I want to do? Easy... NOTHING...but added: A) Get out of the heat; B) Forget about home and business "stuff"; C) Experience and enjoy beautiful scenery; D) Have a lot of fun doing the aforementioned ABC's and maybe learn something in the process!
- 2) How long a drive? Again, Easy... a few hours for a short vacation.
- 3) How long to stay? A short vacation, incorporated a day or two before and after a weekend.
- 4) Where to lodge? No tents, no trailers, no RV... want a nice hotel, possibly with a kitchen...don't want to always eat at restaurants.

5) How much to spend? Never like this question... but figured whatever I'd spend would be WELL worth it to get away and out of the blasted heat. The internet wasn't kind... it listed hundreds of locations and thousands of things to do... everything from beach camping to big city tourist.

Considering the drive, the scenery, the hotels... we became intrigued by Carmel-By-The-Sea, California. A unique interesting artsy town, gorgeous scenery, plenty of hotels, numerous wineries, adjacent to bountiful harvests of summer fruits/vegetables, and daytime summer temperatures in the low 70's and high 50's at night ---slam-dunk--- SOLD! Carmel-By-The-Sea, or Carmel for short, is in fact a unique little community. On our first day in Carmel, I challenged a Carmel born twenty-something-year-old Carmel restaurant bus-boy, Michael, to describe Carmel in three or less sentences. I still giggle at his knowledgeable response..."Carmel's filled with newly-weds, nearly dead's, celebrities, tourists, and service help.



There are mainly six types of businesses: hotels, art galleries, restaurants, boutique/tourist shops, coffee and wine bars. The downtown is surrounded by little houses, quaint secondary vacation cottages owned by Silicon Valley Dot-Com executives, and huge mansions...with the majority of those property owners wishing not to be "citified" so as to retain their "village" look and feel." Really, he would have my vote if he ran for Mayor; but alas, he expressed the need to move to the "big" city and get one good job, verses his current six part-time jobs in Carmel.



To elaborate on Michael's local awareness, Carmel is a one square mile village filled with a European country-charm ambiance. It's roughly a 16-street by 16-street rectangle village. Referencing the Chamber of Commerce Book, Visitor Center Maps/Info, and other paraphernalia, Michael was quite accurate...Carmel has around 21 Art Galleries, 45 Hotels/Inns/Lodges, 53 Restaurant/Dining Establishments, 18 local Winery Tasting Rooms, umpteen Gourmet Coffee Houses, and more boutiques/tourist shops than I cared to count. *Photo: Carmel, picturesque*

I heartily concur with the Official Visitor's Guide touting Travel and Leisure ranking Carmel as one of the world's top five romantic cities. Quoting the article's author, "...storybook cottages, quaint shops, art galleries and inviting eateries..." Nestled within Carmel's village charm are 42 beautiful public Courtyards, Patio's, Passages, and Terraces, accessible by cobblestoned sidewalks surrounding delightful European countryside architecture, all enveloped in beautiful floral gardens, lush trees, and ocean breezes. Oh...not to forget, the entire town appears to be canine friendly – dogs are welcomed in many hotels, restaurants, on beaches, and in the town parks. *Photo: Carmel, picturesque*



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