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Tuesday, November 18, 2014

Road Trip to Central California, Carmel-by-the-Sea | @CarmelBTSea #CarmelBTSea #VisitCarmel

Published by Mary Tran

This is a post written by me for Carmel-by-the-Sea and Hofsas House. All opinions are my own.



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One extended weekend in October we took a road trip to the **Central Coast of California**. It's about a 5.5 hour drive from Orange County, and it has been on our bucket list for a long time. We love scenic drives, and driving up the central coast was like nothing we have seen before. There are miles and miles of beautiful rocky cliffs and gorgeous tide pools great for exploration, biking, and hiking.



CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

Carmel-by-the-Sea is a charming city of one square mile. It's a walking community. Fun Facts: There are no street addresses and no house-to-house mail delivery (they use a central post office), they use wooden posts for street signs, they require a permit to wear high heels over 2 inches, and Clint Eastwood used to be the Mayor in 1986-1988. TIP: Bring flashlights for night walking.

CARMEL WINE WALK BY-THE-SEA PASSPORTS

Carmel-by-the-Sea offers a unique self-guided walking wine tasting tour which includes vouchers to 9 of the 14 tasting rooms all within the 1x1 square mile. You'll be able to sample local estate-grown still and sparkling wines. Passports are available for purchase at the Carmel Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center. (We got ours at our hotel). Note: The Passport does not expire and you can use it over several days, weeks, or months. For more information, please visit their website at www.CarmelWineWalk.org.



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A collage of travel-related images. It includes a beach with a chair, a city skyline at night, and a building with a clock tower. The text 'GROUPON' is in the top left corner. The text 'Explore the world— one deal at a time. See the Deals >' is in the center. The text '© 2011 GROUPON INC.' is in the bottom right corner.

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A row of app icons. From left to right: Pandora, SoundCloud, Angry Birds, and others. The icons are colorful and have a 3D effect.

TIP: Also check their calendar for local events. While we were there, they were hosting their 54th Sand Castle Competition on Carmel Beach.

17-Mile Drive at Pebble Beach

Take a scenic drive along the dramatic Pacific Coastline and through Del Monte Forest. Here you will also find the infamous Lone Cypress Tree. Note: There is a park fee that they will waive if you dine or shop within Pebble Beach. Just show your parking receipt to the merchant. (No entry fee for cyclists).

Big Sur Coast Drive

www.bigsurcalifornia.org

One of our favorite things to do on this road trip was drive along Big Sur Coast. The views are spectacular, amazing, and breathtaking. Our kids' reactions varied, but we plan to do this every few years and make it a tradition.

TIP: We recommend doing this as part of your drive on your way in so you're not backtracking. Allow a full day as you'll be stopping often to walk around and take pictures. Bring binoculars! (You might see sea lions, dolphins, and whales.) We've highlighted some spots, however, there are several others to explore.

- **McWay Falls** (Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park)
- **Rocky Point** (There is also a restaurant. More info below.)
- **Point Lobos**



Cannery Row

Named in honor of John Steinbeck, the historic Cannery Row offers attractions, recreation, dining, shopping, and nightlife. www.canneryrow.com

Carmel Mission

3080 Rio Road
Carmel, CA
(831) 624-1271
www.carmelmission.org

Built in 1771, the Basilica showcases the architecture of early California. The tomb of its founder, Father Junipero Serra, is displayed and preserved in their original décor and artifacts.

Dennis The Menace Park

Located by El Estero Lake. This park is designed by Cartoonist, Hank Ketchum, who lived in Pebble Beach. Free admission.

Monterey Bay Aquarium

886 Cannery Row
Monterey, CA
(831) 648-4888

www.Montereybayaquarium.org

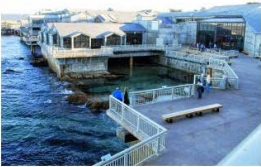
The aquarium's award-winning Splash Zone exhibit (much like a children's museum) includes three ocean habitats: the Enchanted Kelp Forest, Coral Reef Kingdom, and Rugged Rocky Shore. There's also a unique jellyfish exhibit, "The Jellies Experience," a very cool outdoor tide pool amphitheater, touch pools, and great Sea Otters viewing.

Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History

Located at corner of Forest and Central Avenues in Pacific Grove. Free Admission.
Exhibits include local birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and Geology.

Point Pinos Lighthouse

Located near the intersection of Lighthouse and Asilomare Avenues in Pacific Grove. \$2 donation is suggested. It's West Coast's oldest working lighthouse.





ACCOMMODATIONS

With 45 inns located in Carmel-by-the-Sea, you'll be able to find something to meet your liking. For a complete listing of places to stay in Carmel, please visit their website at www.StayInCarmel.org.



Hofsas House

We stayed at the family-friendly Hofsas House which is a unique boutique hotel family-run with a Bavarian-inspired flare. With free WiFi, kitchenettes, fireplaces, spacious rooms, a heated pool, dry saunas, and free continental breakfast, it is centrally located to everything you need within walking distance. If you call ahead, you can order in-room Monterey wine and cheese pairing service ready when you arrive. Other offerings include:

- Champagne & Cheese Pairing
- Beach Fire & S'mores Bundle with blanket and flashlight
- In-Room Couples Massages
- Beach Fire Set-up
- Golf Discounts to (6) Golf Courses
- Monterey Bay Aquarium "2 Day Pass for Price of One" Discount.

Carrie Theis, the General Manager and the original owner's granddaughter, is super sweet and helpful. She is very knowledgeable about the area so don't hesitate to meet with her and ask her questions. We loved that she has binoculars for the children to borrow.

Hofsas House is located on San Carlos between 3rd and 4th Street. (800) 221-2548 www.HofsasHouse.com. Note: it may be hard to find at first because all the street signage are on



posts. Look for a pink hotel!

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

Carmel offers a wide range of dining experiences. We've shared where we've visited below. For a complete listing, please visit their website at www.carmelcalifornia.org.



5th Ave. Deli & Catering Co.

Breakfast & Lunch. Gourmet Deli.

Located on 5th between San Carlos and Dolores.
(831) 625-2688

Note: There are no dining tables. Great for take-out for beach or park picnics.



Il Fornaio

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Located at Pine Inn on Ocean at Monte Verde.
(831) 622-5100, www.ilfornaio.com

Il Fornaio offers a family-friendly Italian menu.



Rocky Point Restaurant

36700 Hwy 1
Carmel, CA
(831) 624-2933

We stopped here for a delicious brunch. It was en route to Big Sur, and we were in amazement. The views are spectacular so even if you don't stop for dining, stop to take in the views!

We loved our visit to California's Central Coast and hope to visit every few years to explore more. The only thing we would do differently is drive up the coast on our way there so we're not taking another full day to back-track. Thanks for the warm hospitality, Carmel-by-the-Sea! For more information, please visit the Carmel Chamber of

Commerce's website at www.carmelcalifornia.org.

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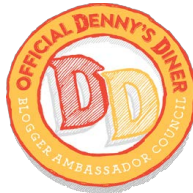
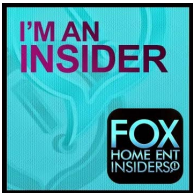
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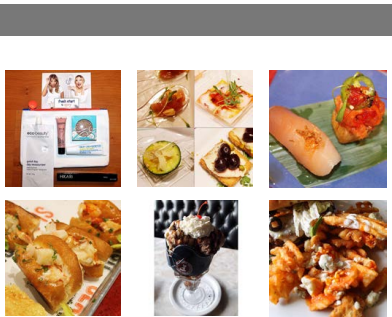
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