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A Foodie's Tour of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California

June 2, 2015 by [Kimberly Button](#)



Kimberly Button

Carmel-by-the-Sea is only one square mile, but the town in California's Monterey County bursts with more than 60 restaurants, bakeries, pubs, and coffeehouses along its easy-to-ramble streets. And with over 75 nearby wineries calling Monterey home, too, there's an array of tasting rooms for locally produced wines. To fully explore Carmel's impressive array of foodie deals, come hungry, put on some comfy shoes, and start walking.

One great way for first-timers to uncover the best of what to eat and drink in the the maze of art gallery-lined streets and hidden courtyards is through a [Carmel Food Tour](#). The three-hour walking excursion features seven stops along the way, including one owned by actress Doris Day. Included bites range from heavy- to full-size portions of wine and chocolate to cocktails and entree tastings — a culinary smorgasbord that could easily double as your afternoon meal and well worth the \$69 per person.

What you won't find on the tour? Ice cream. It's a rare commodity in this community of less than 4,000, where the frozen-but-sticky treat was once banned from being consumed. Thankfully, Clint Eastwood reversed that law when he

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famously became mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea in 1986.

Round out a day of taste testing with dinner at Casanova, considered the most romantic restaurant in Carmel. Among the mix of tiny eclectic rooms is [Van Gogh's Table](#), the actual table where Vincent Van Gogh ate his meals in the last days of his life. Tasting menus and wine pairings are offered in the private room throughout the year (from \$75).



Kimberly Button

As we've hinted at, wine is the preferred adult indulgence here, and there are plenty of places to try the local vino. We have a few family-owned favorites in [Salinas and Soledad](#), including [Mazoni Vineyards](#), which now has a tasting room right in downtown Carmel. They're generally within a 60- to 90-minutes' drive, though you should check hours ahead of time (weekends are your best bet).

If you visit a few tasting rooms over a couple of days — and would rather not worry about transportation — consider getting the [Wine Walk Passport](#). For \$65, you'll get to a myriad of reds, whites, rosés, and sparkling wines, with flights at nine out of the 14 tasting rooms right in town. And since the passports don't have an expiration date, you can be sure to hit up most if not all of them.

Speaking of which, good thing that nearly everything is within walking distance in Carmel-by-the-Sea, and that pedestrians have the right of way when walking the streets. In fact, there are no street lights in the community — and no street numbers, either. So be sure to carry a flashlight at night, and know that for their address, places of business list the two roads they're in between.

Bolstered by a lot of wine and fine dining, you might just feel compelled to throw caution to the wind and buy a permit from City Hall to allow you to wear high heels during your visit (\$10). You'll be a rebel in this community that prides itself on being anything but normal, with a unique souvenir to prove it.

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