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Treat Yourself to a Luxurious Weekend in Carmel-by-the-Sea

By Sarah Medina on February 18, 2016 1:30 PM

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The view from Pebble Beach's 17 Mile Drive is oh-so-Instagrammable. (Photo by Sarah Medina)

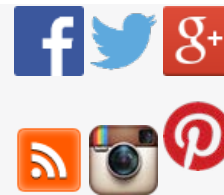
Two weeks ago, I decided to leave the hustle, bustle, and turmoil of the Super Bowl-ridden Bay Area behind and treat myself to a luxurious 36 hours in the Monterey Peninsula. If you're also in need of a short, but glorious, break then follow these simple guidelines to relaxing in style.



GUIDES

- Download the Big Eat App
- Download the Big Drink App
- The Big Drink 2014: 50 Cocktails to Try Before You Die
- The Big Eat 2014: 100 Things to Try Before You Die
- The 2012 Big To-Do SF: 100 Things To Do Before You Die
- The Big Veg 2011: 50 Vegetarian (Or Vegan) Things to Eat Before You Die
- The Big Sweet SF: 50 Treats to Eat Before You Die
- 50 Things to Do in Wine Country Before You Die
- Four Awesome Northern California Hot Springs
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Got a Tip?



1. Arrive in Style: Rent an Audi

Highway 1 is meant for only one thing: cruising down the California coast in a convertible. I decided early on that my tiny Mazda wouldn't cut it among the luxury cars of Carmel and Pebble Beach and solicited the help of **Audi On Demand**, a new car service that lets you rent an Audi for a day/ weekend/ seven minutes in heaven— whatever you need. For my excursion, I got matched up with a 2016 Audi TT Roadster, a gorgeous blue coupe with every amenity you can think of: Wi-Fi (repeat: in-car Wi-Fi), GPS, bluetooth phone service, Sirius radio, water bottles, and even some chic Toms sunglasses in case you forget your own. And while the gadgets and gizmos were wonderful, nothing compared to the thrill of driving 90mph down a curvy road in a car that's obviously meant for that sort of thing. Best of all, you don't even have to leave your house to pick up the car. Audi will send a driver to bring you the car anywhere in San Francisco. When you're done, you just drop it off at the same location and someone will be waiting for it. It's that easy. In fact, the only hard part is going back to your Mazda at the end of the day. // audiondemand.com



Feast on Fresh Seafood: Poke Lab + Pacific's Edge

If you're planning to stop in Monterey during your weekend getaway, then you must try the new **Poke Lab**. Set up like a Chipotle for raw fish and accoutrements, the already-popular establishment offers fresh build-your-own bowls filled with rice, sashimi-grade seafood, sauce, and toppings (including avocado, crab meat, green onions, eggs, seaweed, sesame seeds, wasabi, and ginger. While the price range is a little high (\$9-11 per bowl), San Franciscans used to lunching in the FiDi shouldn't bat an eye. // [475 Alvarado St, Monterey; thepokelab.com](http://475AlvaradoSt,Monterey;thepokelab.com)

The award-winning restaurant at the Hyatt Carmel Highlands, **Pacific's Edge**, should come with a disclaimer. While 7pm might seem like a perfectly reasonable time to make a dinner reservation, it's actually the worst time slot at this glass-walled establishment. The whole point of Pacific's Edge (well, apart from the amazing cuisine) is to dine while admiring a drop-dead-gorgeous view of the Big Sur coastline. One whole side of the restaurant is made up of floor-to-ceiling windows just for this purpose. So make sure to make your reservation early enough to admire the view, or better yet, the sunset. Regardless of whether or not you heed my advice, you're at least in for a gorgeous meal featuring local seafood. The octopus confit comes out perfectly charred on the outside and succulent on the inside, while the Chilean seabass is cooked to a moist perfection. Wine pairings are a must. // highlandsinn.hyatt.com/PacificsEdgeRestaurant



Drink Local Wine: Twisted Roots

Josh Ruiz is growing the kind of grapes we can all get behind. An entrepreneur at heart, Ruiz took up winemaking as a hobby on his farm in Lodi, and sold his first case of wine from the trunk of his car. That was five years ago, and now Ruiz and his wife, Julie, are owners of one of the hippest tasting rooms in town offering Zinfandel and old vine 1918 Zinfandel, a red blend, Petite Syrah, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon from the sunny patio in the back of an art gallery. The grapes come from Julie's family's 45-acre ranch in Lodi, which was first planted with Zinfandel in 1918. Their wines are accessible, comforting, and go with everything from steak to popcorn. Perfect for taking back to your room and enjoying in front of the fireplace. // [12 Del Fino Pl, Carmel Valley](#); [twistedrootsvineyard.com](#)



See the Sights: 17-Mile Drive

If you're hesitant about spending \$10 (cash only) just to drive 17 miles in a circle — stop right there. The **17 Mile Drive** may be a tourist trap, but it is absolutely worth it. On a clear day, you'll never experience better views of the Pacific Ocean. And if you're lucky, you can even spot a seal or two basking in the sun. Take as many photos as possible. // [pebblebeach.com/17-mile-drive](#)

If you've never to the **Monterey Bay Aquarium** before, is a must-stop on the drive. The jellyfish tank alone is guaranteed to get you a hundred Instagram likes. // [886 Cannery Row, Monterey](#); [montereybayaquarium.org](#)



Have a Great Night's Sleep: Hyatt Carmel Highlands

The Carmel Highlands is a gorgeous property overlooking the Big Sur coastline. After the long drive down (and multiple wine stops) the sight of crisp white linen sheets and a cavernous jacuzzi bath tub will immediately make your limbs turn to jelly. Pull back the curtains, have a nightcap on the patio, and then tuck in for one of the comfiest sleeps you've ever had (or maybe that's just the wine talking). Made up of normal hotel rooms as well as timeshares (for those who never want to leave), the hotel will undergo a renovation this spring to become even more fabulous. // 120 Highland Dr, Carmel-By-The-Sea; highlandsinn.hyatt.com

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