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5 romantic weekend getaways in California

From Napa to San Diego and the Santa Barbara wine country to Carmel and Bodega Bay

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A weekend away rejuvenates everyone, but this quintet of romantic getaways offers something more: Five delightful ways to kindle — or rekindle — romance, whether you're a swooning honeymooner, a long-wed couple or a starry-eyed pair on your first trip together.

Want to loll on a beach, sip mimosas and do nothing at all? Prefer a stunning coastal hike and some cinematic magic before retreating to your ocean-view bungalow? Or perhaps mud baths and massages are more your thing. There's a weekend getaway plan here for everyone.

1 Carmel weekend with waterfalls and wine



A view from one of the thermal pools at Refuge in Carmel Valley. (Photo: The Refuge)

Between its cozy bistros and charming inns, Carmel-by-the-Sea makes a wonderful getaway for anyone at any time — but for couples, it's simply sublime. With 16 wine-tasting rooms right downtown, you can winery hop on foot, then stroll back to your B&B for a nap before dinner. Don't miss the Refuge, where the waterfalls, plunge pools and massage rooms will reduce you and your sweetheart to a thoroughly blissed-out state. [Here's the scoop](#) on where to go and where to stay.

2 Solvang wineries, with a side of ostrich

If you're a fan of the movie "Sideways" — and if you've never seen this homage to Santa Barbara's wine country, that's OK, too — a trek to Solvang, the Danish-inspired village on California's Central Coast, makes a wonderful getaway. You can go tasting at the wineries depicted in the movie, get up close and personal with scores of ostriches and check out the aebleskiver and craft cocktails in town. Here's a ["Sideways" inspired itinerary](#) to help you plan.

3 Calistoga mud baths and bicycle picnics



The historic Brannan Cottage Inn in Calistoga was one of several cottages built by Sam Brannan. (Photo: Brannan Cottage Inn)

A Roman spa with mud baths, a spouting geyser and a bicycle picnic among the grapevines? If that sounds heavenly — and it should — consider a romantic weekend getaway to Calistoga, the wine country village that dates back to the 19th century. Slumber sweetly at the historic [Brannan Cottage Inn](#), a six-bedroom charmer built in 1860. Ride bicycles down country lanes. And do not miss out on that post-mud bath massage. Find all [the details](#) here.

4 Bodega Bay birds — and bird-inspired cocktails



The Bodega Bay Lodge offers ocean views from every room and from the infinity-edge whirlpool, as well. (Photo: Bodega Bay Lodge)

Cliff-top hikes, seaside chowder and a dash of Alfred Hitchcock, plus a luxurious (but not too spendy) hotel, add up to a stunning getaway, with just enough whimsy — including "Birds" inspired cocktails and a Hitchcock museum, complete with a squishy, life-size Hitchcock statue — to keep things fun. Find the [itinerary](#) here.

5 Coronado Island's sandy splendors



Coronado's beach routinely appears on the "nation's top beaches" lists. (Photo: Hotel del Coronado)

OK, so it's not really an island. It's more like the bulbous end of a long skinny peninsula. But the South Coast's Coronado is a spectacular spot, fringed with sandy shores, lapping waves and a 19th-century hotel straight out of your most cinematic dreams. Stay at the iconic Del, stroll the beach at sunset and don't miss Sunday brunch. Find all the [details here](#).

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