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50 Charming Small Towns to Visit Across Every State

Plan a short getaway to one of these off-the-beaten-path destinations.

By Rachel Center

May 17, 2017, 9:23 a.m.



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Add one of these picturesque small towns to your travel itinerary this year.

When it comes to vacation destinations, most travelers tend to be more familiar with popular big cities than small towns. Everyone knows that you can't leave New York City without visiting Central Park. And walking Hollywood Boulevard is essential for understanding Los Angeles' star power. Small towns, on the other hand, often don't get as much attention as metropolises. But that doesn't mean they don't deserve a spot on your bucket list. Many small towns offer a more laid-back experience than what you'd expect in a bustling city, plus fascinating historical attractions and one-of-a-kind sites. From tiny hamlets to waterfront villages, here are 50 charming small towns across the country.

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California: Carmel-by-the-Sea

Nestled between Big Sur and Monterey Bay, Carmel sits atop the bluffs of Carmel Beach, considered one of the [best beaches in California](#). The neighborhood's streets – most of which lead directly to the shore – are worth exploration as well. As a rule, Carmel does not allow chain restaurants or stores within its borders, so treat yourself to one of the many independent shops, restaurants and art galleries that line its idyllic avenues. But what really helps give Carmel its whimsical feel is its collection of English-style cottages that dot the neighborhood, left by architect and former resident Hugh Comstock.