ROAD TRIP · UNITED STATES

Your 14-day road trip from Los Angeles

7 towns, flying home from Los Angeles.

Length	14 days, 13 nights
Distance	1,350 km, 8 driving days
Behind the wheel	18 h
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – Los Angeles (LAX), Los Angeles (LAX) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Los Angeles	Days 1–2	**8**
Three Rivers	Days 3–4	**10**
Mariposa	Days 5–6	**12**
Monterey	Days 7–8	**14**
Big Sur	Days 9–10	**16**
San Luis Obispo	Days 11–12	**18**
Santa Barbara	Day 13	**20**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Los Angeles	30	30 min	
2		Los Angeles			
3		Three Rivers	320	4 h	
4		Three Rivers			
5		Mariposa	230	3 h 10 min	
6		Mariposa			
7		Monterey	250	3 h 20 min	
8		Monterey			
9		Big Sur	50	50 min	
10		Big Sur			
11		San Luis Obispo	170	2 h 30 min	
12		San Luis Obispo			
13		Santa Barbara	150	2 h	
14		Flight home from LAX	150	2 h	

1,350 km · 18 h behind the wheel · on average 170 km a driving day

Kilometres and drive times by road (OSRM, OpenStreetMap), without stops: plan generously.

The route



Map: US Census Bureau (public domain) · roads © OpenStreetMap contributors

ON THE ROAD

Day 1	Land at Los Angeles (LAX), drive to Los Angeles · About 30 km (20 mi), 30 min
Day 3	Los Angeles, drive to Three Rivers · About 320 km (200 mi), 4 h
Day 5	Three Rivers, drive to Mariposa · About 230 km (140 mi), 3 h 10 min
Day 7	Mariposa, drive to Monterey · About 250 km (160 mi), 3 h 20 min
Day 9	Monterey, drive to Big Sur · About 50 km (30 mi), 50 min
Day 11	Big Sur, drive to San Luis Obispo · About 170 km (110 mi), 2 h 30 min

Well prepared

ESTA

Dutch and Belgian travellers need no visa for a holiday of up to 90 days, but do need an approved ESTA before boarding. It costs about $40, is valid for two years (or until your passport expires) and is applied for online. Apply at least 72 hours before you fly, and only on the official site.

esta.cbp.dhs.gov

Passport

An electronic passport (with the chip symbol), valid for the whole stay. Children need their own passport and ESTA.

nl.usembassy.gov

Driving licence

Your Dutch driving licence is accepted for renting and driving a car as a visitor. An international driving permit next to it helps with police and some rental desks.

anwb.nl

Renting a car

The renter is the main driver and pays with a credit card in their own name (no debit or prepaid card); the deposit is held on it. Usually from 21, and from 21 to 24 you pay a young-driver fee of about $25 a day. Book from home with insurance included (CDW/LDW and extra liability, SLI) and an extra driver if you want to take turns. Returning the car elsewhere (a one-way trip) costs extra. Fuel is sold by the gallon (3.8 litres); fill it up yourself before you bring it back.

Driving in the USA

Keep right; speeds are in miles an hour (65 mph is 105 km/h). Turning right on red is allowed after stopping, unless a sign says no. At a 4-way stop, whoever stopped first goes first. For a stopped yellow school bus with flashing lights you stop in both directions. Toll roads are often electronic only: ask your rental company about its toll pass. On remote stretches (parks, desert) there's little signal and a long way to the next pump: fill up at half and download the map.

Renting an RV

You can rent an RV from about 21 with an ordinary car licence. On top of the rent, count on mileage (often per mile), a kit with bedding and kitchen things, cleaning and the campsite: in the popular parks you book those months ahead on recreation.gov. Big RVs aren't allowed on every park road. Take photos of the RV when you pick it up: damage and missing items are the most heard complaint.

recreation.gov

National parks

Most big parks charge per car. Visitors from abroad pay $100 a person extra at 11 popular parks; the annual pass for non-residents is $250. Some parks need a timed-entry reservation in high season.

nps.gov

Money and tipping

Prices are without sales tax, which is added at the till. In restaurants a tip of 15 to 20% is usual. Cards are accepted almost everywhere; at the pump you may be asked for a ZIP code, so pay inside.

Travel insurance and health

Care in the USA is very expensive: take travel insurance with worldwide medical cover, and check whether your health insurance covers the USA. Cancellation insurance covers the trip if you can't go; insure the rental car with the rental company (see Renting a car). Take medicines in their original packaging, with a prescription in English. Emergency number: 911.

Power, phone and time

110 volt with flat two-pin plugs (type A/B): bring an adapter. A US eSIM is cheaper than roaming. The mainland has four time zones, Arizona mostly without daylight saving time.

Customs

Fresh food, meat and fruit may not be brought in. Declare food you carry.

Packing list

- [ ] Passport (valid for the whole trip)
- [ ] ESTA, printed
- [ ] Driving licence (and an international one)
- [ ] Credit card in the driver's name
- [ ] Travel and cancellation insurance
- [ ] Confirmations: flights, car, hotels
- [ ] America the Beautiful pass for the parks
- [ ] Plug adapter for type A/B (110 volt)
- [ ] Car charger and phone holder
- [ ] eSIM or offline maps
- [ ] Sunscreen, sunglasses and a cap
- [ ] Water bottles for the desert
- [ ] Hiking shoes
- [ ] Layers: the coast and the nights get cold
- [ ] Medicines, in your hand luggage
- [ ] A pen, for this booklet

DON'T FORGET

Notes



DAYS 1–2

Los Angeles CA

Sunset Boulevard's palm trees

Land at Los Angeles (LAX), drive to Los Angeles: about 30 km (20 mi), 30 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- The Hollywood Walk of Fame and the Hollywood sign
- Griffith Observatory at sunset
- Santa Monica Pier and Venice Beach
- The Getty Center

With an extra night

With a second night: Universal Studios or Warner Bros., or Malibu's beaches along Highway 1.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Warner Bros. studio tour — roughly €70 a person
- [ ] Universal Studios Hollywood — roughly €110 a person
- [ ] Hollywood sign hike — roughly €50 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] FOUND Hotels, Santa Monica, Series by Marriott · 3★ — roughly €200
  12311 Santa Monica Blvd
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Los Angeles LAX/Century Boulevard · 3★ — roughly €150
  5933 W Century Blvd
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express Hollywood Walk of Fame by IHG · 3★ — roughly €220
  1921 N Highland Avenue
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express West Los Angeles by IHG · 3★ — roughly €350
  11250 Santa Monica Blvd
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE · 3★ — roughly €190
  901 W Olympic Blvd

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DAYS 3–4

Three Rivers CA

Sequoia National Park

Los Angeles, drive to Three Rivers: about 320 km (200 mi), 4 h

2 nights

HOTEL

- [ ] Beautiful Retreat 4 Miles to Park Entrance Steps to Dining · 3★
  43635 Encina Dr
- [ ] Cozy Condo 4 Miles to Park Entrance with BBQ and Steps to Dining · 3★
  43653 Encina Dr
- [ ] Tranquil Retreat 4 Miles to Sequoia Park Entrance with BBQ and Balcony · 3★
  43647 Encina Dr
- [ ] Spacious sequoia Park retreat, best panoramic views · 3★
  40613 Crystal Dr
- [ ] Muniz Village · 3★
  40981 Old Three Rivers Road

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DAYS 5–6

Mariposa CA

Yosemite Valley

Three Rivers, drive to Mariposa: about 230 km (140 mi), 3 h 10 min

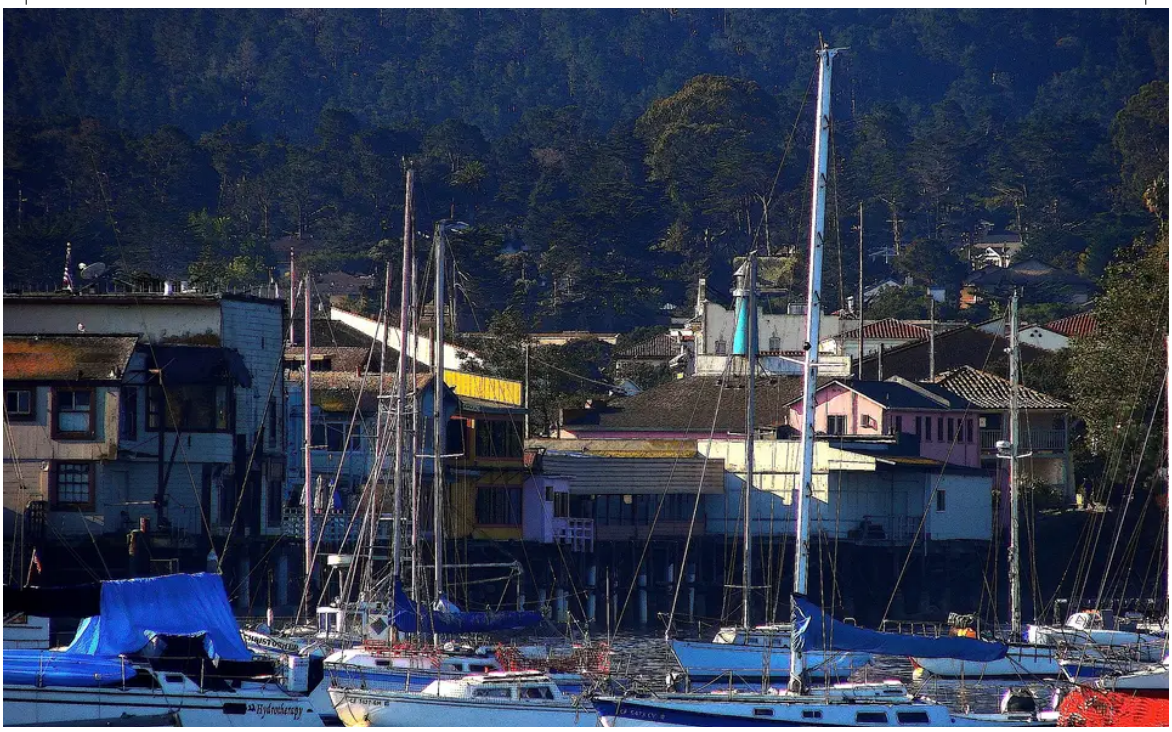
2 nights

MARIPOSA · DAYS 5–6

HOTEL

- [ ] Historic Mariposa Stagecoach Stop w/ Gas Fire Pit! · 3★
  3086 Wass Rd
- [ ] Oak Meadows House - A unique home near Yosemite · 3★
  5465 Oak Meadows Road
- [ ] Peaceful + Private Mariposa Cabin on 2 Acres! · 3★
  3502 Comet Mine Ln
- [ ] Private Hot Tub! Pet-friendly Mariposa Retreat · 3★
  5313 Carleton Rd
- [ ] Waterfront Mariposa Hideaway: Hot Tub & Mtn Views! · 3★
  4872-A Usona Rd

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DAYS 7–8

Monterey CA

17-Mile Drive

Mariposa, drive to Monterey: about 250 km (160 mi), 3 h 20 min

2 nights

MONTEREY · DAYS 7–8

HOTEL

- [ ] Spindrift Inn · 3★ — roughly €270
  652 Cannery Row
- [ ] Victorian Inn · 3★ — roughly €200
  487 Foam St
- [ ] Stage Coach Lodge · 3★ — roughly €130
  1111 Tenth Street
- [ ] Hampton Inn Monterey · 3★ — roughly €220
  2401 Del Monte Ave
- [ ] Ramada by Wyndham Monterey · 3★ — roughly €120
  2058 N. Fremont Street

NOTES



DAYS 9–10

Big Sur CA

Bixby Creek Bridge on the Pacific Coast Highway

Monterey, drive to Big Sur: about 50 km (30 mi), 50 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Bixby Creek Bridge
- McWay Falls in Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park
- Pfeiffer Beach and its purple sand
- Point Lobos on the way from Monterey

With an extra night

With a second night: hike the redwoods of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, or see Monterey's aquarium and 17-Mile Drive.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Monterey Bay whale watching — roughly €60 a person
- [ ] Big Sur coast tour — roughly €120 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Big Sur Campground and Cabins · 3★
  California 1
- [ ] Big Sur River Inn · 3★
  46800 Highway One

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DAYS 11–12

San Luis Obispo CA

Hearst Castle and the elephant seals

Big Sur, drive to San Luis Obispo: about 170 km (110 mi), 2 h 30 min

2 nights

SAN LUIS OBISPO · DAYS 11–12

HOTEL

- [ ] Lofted Bedroom Teal Tiny Home with Creek Views · 3★
  2994 South Higuera Street
- [ ] Peaceful Tiny Home Loft and Sauna · 3★
  2994 South Higuera Street
- [ ] The BEST Tiny Home Loft and Private Yard · 3★
  2994 South Higuera Street
- [ ] La Quinta by Wyndham San Luis Obispo · 3★ — roughly €130
  1845 Monterey St.
- [ ] TownePlace Suites by Marriott San Luis Obispo · 3★ — roughly €170
  1301 CALLE JOAQUIN

NOTES



DAY 13

Santa Barbara CA

The Santa Ynez wine country

San Luis Obispo, drive to Santa Barbara: about 150 km (90 mi), 2 h

1 night

HOTEL

- [ ] Avania Inn of Santa Barbara · 3★ — roughly €210
  128 Castillo St
- [ ] Harbor House Inn · 3★ — roughly €300
  104 Bath Street
- [ ] Pacific Crest Hotel Santa Barbara · 3★ — roughly €130
  433 Corona Del Mar Drive
- [ ] Marina Beach Hotel · 3★ — roughly €240
  21 Bath St
- [ ] The Eagle Inn · 3★
  232 Natoma Avenue

NOTES

What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	Los Angeles	€200	–	€60	**€260**
2	Los Angeles	€200	–	€60	**€260**
3	Three Rivers	€160	–	€60	**€220**
4	Three Rivers	€160	–	€60	**€220**
5	Mariposa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
6	Mariposa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
7	Monterey	€160	–	€60	**€220**
8	Monterey	€160	–	€60	**€220**
9	Big Sur	€320	–	€60	**€380**
10	Big Sur	€320	–	€60	**€380**
11	San Luis Obispo	€160	–	€60	**€220**
12	San Luis Obispo	€160	–	€60	**€220**
13	Santa Barbara	€160	–	€60	**€220**
14	Flight home from LAX	–	–	€60	**€60**

Flights	€1,700
Hotels	€2,480
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€840
Total	**€5,020**
	€2,510 a person

An estimate to plan with (prices of 2026-10): hotels, the ticked excursions, car hire and flights. No fuel or meals.

Notes

About this booklet

Made on rondreis.expert. Your trip is still there, to change and print again: usa.roundtrip.expert/planner/

PHOTOS

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Los Angeles	Aerial views of residential Los Angeles, California LCCN2013632611.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain
Three Rivers	Generals Highway, Clover Creek Bridge, Spanning Clover Creek on Generals Highway, approxi, Three Rivers vicinity (Tulare County, California).jpg · Brian C. Grogan, Photographer, Public domain
Mariposa	Mariposa County Courthouse January 2025.jpg · Guywelch2000, CC0
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Big Sur	Big Sur June 2008.jpg · Calilover, Public domain
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MAP AND TYPE

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