ROAD TRIP · UNITED STATES

Wine country, the redwoods and Lake Tahoe

Napa and Sonoma, the tallest trees on earth and the blue of Lake Tahoe.

Length	13 days, 12 nights
Distance	1,520 km, 7 driving days
Behind the wheel	19 h 50 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – San Francisco (SFO), San Francisco (SFO) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

San Francisco	Days 1–3	**8**
Napa	Days 4–5	**10**
Mendocino	Days 6–7	**12**
Eureka	Days 8–9	**14**
South Lake Tahoe	Days 10–11	**16**
San Francisco	Day 12	**18**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		San Francisco	20	20 min	
2		San Francisco			
3		San Francisco			
4		Napa	80	1 h	
5		Napa			
6		Mendocino	200	3 h	
7		Mendocino			
8		Eureka	230	3 h 10 min	
9		Eureka			
10		South Lake Tahoe	660	8 h 10 min	
11		South Lake Tahoe			
12		San Francisco	300	4 h	
13		Flight home from SFO	20	20 min	

1,520 km · 19 h 50 min behind the wheel · on average 220 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 San Francisco (SFO), drive to San Francisco · About 20 km (10 mi), 20 min
Day 4	San Francisco, drive to Napa · About 80 km (50 mi), 1 h
Day 6	Napa, drive to Mendocino · About 200 km (130 mi), 3 h
Day 8	Mendocino, drive to Eureka · About 230 km (140 mi), 3 h 10 min
Day 10	Eureka, drive to South Lake Tahoe · About 660 km (410 mi), 8 h 10 min
Day 12	South Lake Tahoe, drive to San Francisco · About 300 km (190 mi), 4 h

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 1–3

San Francisco CA

The Golden Gate and Sausalito

Land at San Francisco (SFO), drive to San Francisco: about 20 km (10 mi), 20 min

3 nights

SAN FRANCISCO · DAYS 1–3

HOTEL

- [ ] Inn at Union Square · 3★
  440 Post St
- [ ] Chancellor Hotel on Union Square · 3★ — roughly €120
  433 Powell St
- [ ] White Swan Inn · 3★ — roughly €150
  845 Bush St
- [ ] Petite Auberge · 3★ — roughly €190
  863 Bush St
- [ ] Hyatt Place San Francisco/Downtown · 3★ — roughly €190
  701 3rd St

NOTES



DAYS 4–5

Napa CA

Wine tasting in Napa and Sonoma

San Francisco, drive to Napa: about 80 km (50 mi), 1 h

2 nights

NAPA · DAYS 4–5

HOTEL

- [ ] Poetry Inn Napa Valley · 3★
  6380 Silverado Trail
- [ ] Serene Napa Retreat w/ Pool Access & Patio! · 3★
  1600 Atlas Peak Rd
- [ ] The Giraffe Inn at Old Parks Manor · 3★
  4036 Browns Valley Rd.
- [ ] 1801 First Luxury Inn · 3★
  1801 First Street
- [ ] Elm House Inn · 3★
  800 California Boulevard

NOTES



DAYS 6–7

Mendocino CA

The coast north of the Bay

Napa, drive to Mendocino: about 200 km (130 mi), 3 h

2 nights

MENDOCINO · DAYS 6–7

HOTEL

- [ ] Mendocino View East · 3★
  44920 Little Lake Road
- [ ] Peaceful Mendocino Cottage Surrounded By Redwoods · 3★
  40300 Comptche Ukiah Rd
- [ ] Joshua Grindle Inn · 3★
  44800 Little Lake Rd
- [ ] Agate Cove Inn · 3★ — roughly €320
  11201 N Lansing Street
- [ ] Inn at Schoolhouse Creek · 3★
  7051 Shoreline Hwy

NOTES



DAYS 8–9

Eureka CA

Redwood National Park

Mendocino, drive to Eureka: about 230 km (140 mi), 3 h 10 min

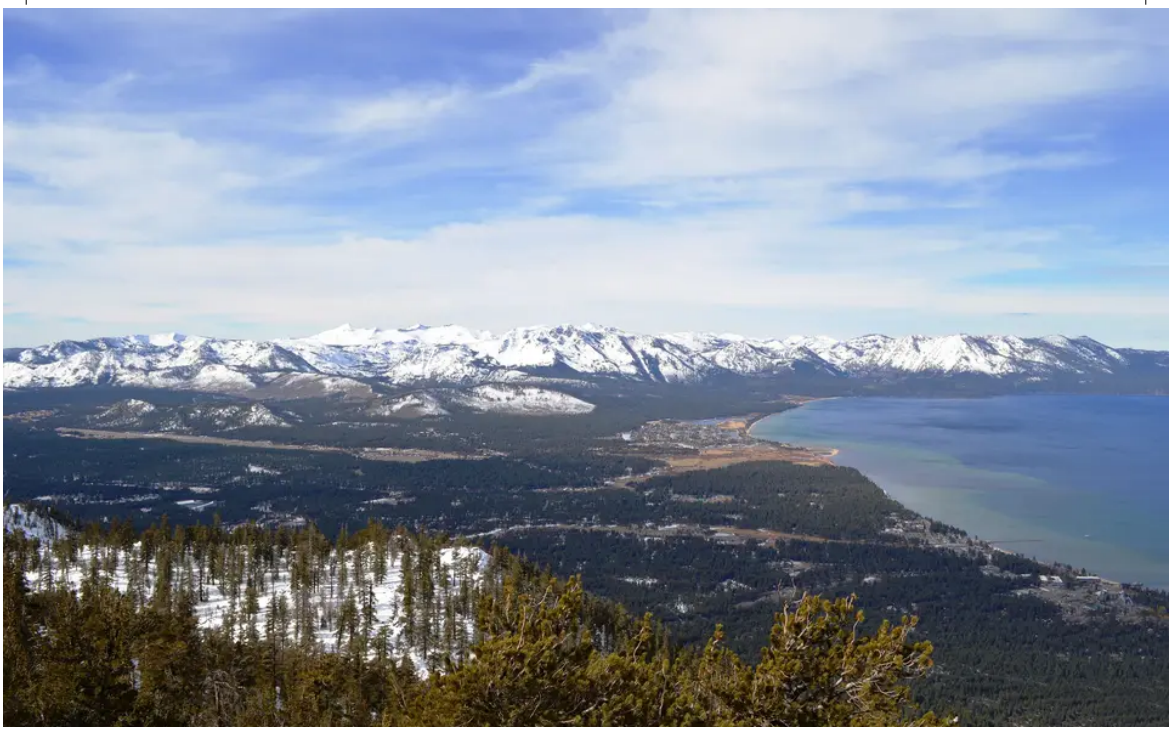
2 nights

EUREKA · DAYS 8–9

HOTEL

- [ ] Peaceful Eureka Beach Cottage w/ 30-foot Dock · 3★
  26 Crab St
- [ ] Home2 Suites By Hilton Eureka · 3★ — roughly €140
- [ ] Carter House Inns · 3★ — roughly €200
  301 L St
- [ ] Eureka Cottage Near Sequoia Park & Old Town! · 3★
  2219 Pine St
- [ ] Best Western Plus Humboldt Bay Inn · 3★ — roughly €110
  232 W 5th St

NOTES



DAYS 10–11

South Lake Tahoe CA

Emerald Bay

Eureka, drive to South Lake Tahoe: about 660 km (410 mi), 8 h 10 min

2 nights

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE · DAYS 10–11

HOTEL

- [ ] The Coachman Hotel · 3★ — roughly €320
  4100 Pine Boulevard
- [ ] Resthaven Tahoe · 3★
  4145 Manzanita Ave
- [ ] Postmarc Hotel and Spa Suites · 3★ — roughly €150
  3696 Lake Tahoe Blvd
- [ ] Station House Inn - Near Heavenly Gondola · 3★
  901 Park Avenue
- [ ] The Elet Hotel · 3★ — roughly €240
  954 Park Ave

NOTES



DAY 12

San Francisco CA

Before the flight home

South Lake Tahoe, drive to San Francisco: about 300 km (190 mi), 4 h

1 night

SAN FRANCISCO · DAY 12

HOTEL

- [ ] Inn at Union Square · 3★
  440 Post St
- [ ] Chancellor Hotel on Union Square · 3★ — roughly €120
  433 Powell St
- [ ] White Swan Inn · 3★ — roughly €150
  845 Bush St
- [ ] Petite Auberge · 3★ — roughly €190
  863 Bush St
- [ ] Hyatt Place San Francisco/Downtown · 3★ — roughly €190
  701 3rd St

NOTES

What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
2	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
3	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
4	Napa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
5	Napa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
6	Mendocino	€160	–	€60	**€220**
7	Mendocino	€160	–	€60	**€220**
8	Eureka	€160	–	€60	**€220**
9	Eureka	€160	–	€60	**€220**
10	South Lake Tahoe	€160	–	€60	**€220**
11	South Lake Tahoe	€160	–	€60	**€220**
12	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
13	Flight home from SFO	–	–	€60	**€60**

Flights	€1,700
Hotels	€1,920
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€780
Total	**€4,400**
	€2,200 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/tours/redwoods-tahoe/

PHOTOS

From Wikimedia Commons, all free of rights (public domain or CC0).

San Francisco	Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, California LCCN2013633353.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain
Napa	Vineyard in Napa Valley, California LCCN2013630820.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain
Mendocino	Pacific Ocean views in Northern California LCCN2013632682.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain
Eureka	Boats at dock, Northern California LCCN2013634831.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain
South Lake Tahoe	Lake Tahoe, California 02.jpg · Blake Everett, CC0
San Francisco	Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, California LCCN2013633353.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain

MAP AND TYPE

Map: US Census Bureau (public domain), roads © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL). Type: Playfair Display and Inter (SIL Open Font License).