

# Let roads lead you to paradise in California

## State Highway 1, others take you on wondrous journeys

**F**ew states in the U.S. have as many personalities as California. Wine country, national parks, major-metropolitan cities, enormous redwood forests and small towns comprise much of a state built for sunshine and raining with stars. This vast state is waiting to be explored.

Perhaps the best way to see California is by vehicle. Road trips are synonymous with the Golden State. Miles of roads hug the Pacific shoreline and other locations. Unique destinations are waiting to be discovered.

State Highway 1 – aka Pacific Coast Highway – is arguably one of the world's most famous roadways. It's made countless appearances on the big and small screens. It covers nearly 700 miles from Mendocino County in the north to Orange County in the south.

Ocean waves crash into rocky beaches. Winding roads uncover stunning sights, forests provide lush settings and territories are waiting to be uncovered.

The Big Sur Highway is the road's most iconic stretch. It runs 72 miles between San Luis Obispo and Pebble Beach. Traveling this wondrous path will take you past some of the state's most epic scenery and destinations like Morro Bay, Hearst Castle, McWay Falls, the Bixby Creek Bridge and Big Sur.

Highway 1 leads to the 17-Mile Drive, a private-toll road that has entertained visitors for more than a century. Circle



**PRETTY PICTURE** – A colorful ocean sunset lights up the sky while taking a ride on Pacific Coast Highway near San Francisco. *Image: Tunatura. Adobe Stock.*

through Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove. Absorb the stunning landscapes and homes, as well as the famous Lone Cypress – a Monterey cypress tree that has been trademarked.

Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex is a short detour away on the Oceano and Nipomo Loop, south of San Luis Obispo. Towering, shifting sand dunes populate the area. And the Monarch Butterfly Grove is one of the largest colonies in the U.S.

Highway 1 traces the magnificent coastline and sites like Point Reyes National Seashore just north of San Francisco. It's celebrated lighthouse and Fort Ross State Historic Park – a former 19th-century Russian outpost – highlight the location.

Orange County offers a trip through the heart of California's surf culture along Pacific Coast Highway. Huntington Beach – aka Surf City USA – Newport Beach and Balboa Island join

hands with romantic Laguna Beach and Dana Point. Experience the epitome of the SoCal beach lifestyle along the famous roadway.

In search of tranquility on a southern California beach? Try Highway 75. Better known as Silver Strand Highway, it runs nine miles down the isthmus of Coronado to Imperial Beach in San Diego County. Take advantage of the upscale beach town of Coronado and witness the amazing San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge.

And don't forget L.A. Take a road trip through Los Angeles on Sunset Boulevard. It runs 22 miles across the city, from downtown to the Pacific Palisades and Pacific Coast Highway. Visit the hipster districts like Echo Park and Silver Lake, the legendary Sunset Strip and ritzy Beverly Hills and Bel-Air.

Highway 2 runs north of Los Angeles and offers travelers the opportunity to enjoy the Angeles Crest Scenic Byway. It meanders along the spine of the San Gabriel Mountains, splitting the Mojave Desert and L.A. Basin.

A drive through the Avenue of the Giants is a 31-mile trip through a cathedral of towering coastal redwoods in Humboldt Redwoods State Park. The world's tallest trees reside there. Many are more than 2,000 years old.

Don't hesitate to hit the highway in California. It's a golden opportunity you don't want to pass up.

# Time stands still during trip to Barbados

## Caribbean isle hits on all cylinders in every tropical category

**B**arbados might have you wondering if you found paradise. The climate is tropical and the surroundings are magical. This might be nirvana.

The **pare**-shaped island lies about 300 miles off the coast of Venezuela. It shares British Colonial traditions and mixes them perfectly with its modern appeal.

The island is small, but it makes the most out of each parcel. It's 21 miles long and 14 miles wide – or just big enough.

It's encircled by coral reefs that are teeming with marine life. Crystal-blue waters soothe your senses and calm your soul. Are you sure this isn't paradise?

Bridgetown is the hub of Barbados. The capital city, once known as the "London of the West Indies," is a UNESCO World Heritage site. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the British Colonial Garrison ranked among the largest in the Colonies.

Bridgetown often is the first landfall for ships that are making the Atlantic crossing. It remains a popular port. Carnival, Princess, Royal Caribbean and Celebrity are among the cruise lines that call.

Beach bums can savor more than 70 miles of pristine shoreline sand, ranging from mild to wild. The west coast stretches from Bridgetown to Holetown. It's powdery-white beaches are populated



**PICTURE PERFECT** – Puffy clouds populate a blue sky over the beautiful, pristine beaches of Barbados. *Image: Richard Semik. Adobe Stock.*

by luxury resorts and earned it the nickname "Platinum Coast".

Tranquility reigns on the south coast. Crane Beach steals the spotlight. Ranked among the best beaches in the world, its alluring backdrop of cliffs and smiling crescent of pink sand make it a perfect romantic getaway.

East Coast Road overlooks the robust northeast coast and is one of the island's most scenic drives. Surfers are drawn to

Bathsheba Beach. It's cradled by hills, with enormous, mushroom-shaped boulders rising from the sea. The "Soup Bowl", where Atlantic rollers batter the shore, can be seen spectacularly from the cliffs.

Andromeda Botanic Gardens cascades off an elfin hillside that is strewn with large coral-rock formations. Peaceful trails meander through gentle gullies that are filled with an array

of orchids, ginger lilies, heliconia and palms. Green Monkeys chatter from the trees.

The island earned its **named** because of its extravagant tropical foliage. In 1536, Portuguese explorer Pedro Campos called it Los Barbados – "the bearded ones" – after witnessing the long-hanging aerial roots of the island's bearded fig trees.

Barbados maintains a certain sense of decorum. Topless sunbathing and wearing camouflage clothing is illegal.

The lush green hills are sparked by remnants of old sugar plantations and mills. Tour restored Bajan Great Houses like St. Nicholas Abbey. Completed in 1660, it's one of the few remaining authentic Jacobean homes in the world.

Locals first distilled Barbados' famous Mount Gay rum in 1703. Learn about the oldest brand of rum and the essential ingredient in Planter's Punch by taking a tour-and-tasting session at the Mount Gay Distillery.

Journey deep into the ground at Harrison's Cave, where you'll find hundreds of icicle-shaped stalactites and stalagmites creating an underground cathedral. The crystalized-limestone cavern was discovered in 1795 and highlights include a subterranean waterfall that plunges 25 feet into a deep emerald pool.

Perfection isn't easy to achieve, but Barbados comes pretty, darn close.