

VENTANA INN & SPA

Experience Guide

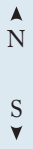


VENTANA
BIG SUR



VENTANA
INN & SPA

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Ventana Inn & Spa

As you wind your way up the hillside, the world slips away and you're instantly enveloped in a place of extraordinary beauty—Ventana Inn & Spa, Big Sur's most idyllic getaway resort. Tucked away and spread across 243 acres of rolling

meadows and wooded hillsides, your retreat is quiet and secluded. It is a perfectly peaceful atmosphere. Relax. Reflect. Reconnect with yourself, and with nature. Explore and absorb the magnificence of Big Sur.



Ventana Inn

Ventana offers a blend of rustic sophistication and elegant simplicity. Suites and guestrooms are beautifully appointed with thoughtful details. In harmony with the natural setting, these spacious sanctuaries abound with pampering amenities.



The Spa at Ventana

Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Lose yourself in the fragrances of wild mountain lavender and other natural botanical essences as you are pampered with a signature treatment. Spend an afternoon poolside reading a good book, or ease your tensions away as you soak in our outdoor Japanese hot baths while gazing at stars dotting the midnight sky.



The Restaurant at Ventana

Stroll through the forest on a quaint winding path to The Restaurant at Ventana, where sustainable ingredients from California's Central Coast are expertly combined to create memorable dishes that pair perfectly with our award-winning wine list. Savor the exquisite tastes in the lodge-like dining room or on the terrace overlooking the spectacular Big Sur coastline.



The Gallery at Ventana

Take a peek inside and experience for yourself the unique collection of paintings, sculpture, jewelry, hand-blown glass, stone and wood work, ceramics, basketry, and photography. We've carefully selected works from artist's studios in Big Sur and all around Monterey County. You can also visit the Gallery for luxuriously soft Ventana logo wear made from sustainable materials.

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LEGAL DISCLAIMER

All contact information was correct at time of printing. Please verify information, hours of operation, and if any associated fees apply before venturing out.

Please note that some of the trails presented in the Ventana Inn & Spa Experience Guide may be dangerous due to changing seasons and weather conditions. Please be cautious when navigating trails; be prepared and wear proper attire and shoes. For other useful information, see pages 14–15. Ventana Inn & Spa is not liable for accidents or injuries that may occur on any of the trails featured in the Experience Guide.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Courtesy of David J. Gubernick (rainbowspirit.com), except: inside cover, page 27 and page 28 by Kodiak Greenwood; page 2; page 25 top courtesy of Earthbound Farm; and page 26 courtesy of Monterey Bay Aquarium.

CONTRIBUTORS

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History

Welcome to Ventana Inn & Spa, your window to Big Sur—a name that evokes superhuman geographical dimensions as well as layers of American lore interspersed with stories as intriguing as the land that witnessed them.



Coastal views from Ventana Inn & Spa

Once called *el país grande del sur* by Spanish settlers, “the Big Country of the South” referred to the unexplored and unmapped wilderness along the coast south of Monterey. The name evolved in the early 1900s when residents petitioned the government to call the post office “Big Sur.” Today, Big Sur has come to denote a region that encompasses a 90-mile stretch between Carmel to the north and San Simeon to the south. Situated between the Santa Lucia Range to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, Big Sur’s 300 square miles

are predominantly comprised of state parks, national forests and unincorporated public land. There is no downtown—only miles of staggeringly beautiful coastline, ocean cliffs, steep ridges, jagged peaks, deep gorges and two rivers: Big Sur and Little Sur. The lay of the land allows for innumerable hidden gems, whether these are natural or man-made. This guide is meant to help you access these gems. Yet it is only a starting point for a life-long journey, as the more you visit Big Sur, the more you discover how large and diverse the region can be.

The Evolution

Geologically, Big Sur is a youthful region. The Santa Lucia mountain range has taken its shape in a mere five million years through the collision of tectonic plates and the compression of massive faults. The story of the rocks that make it, however, begins 130 million years ago, with sediments from an ancient mountain range 1,800 miles southeast in present-day Mexico. The hard crystalline rocks that constitute the high peaks of the Santa Lucia Range, such as the Ventana Double Cone and Pico Blanco, are made of various types of granite, marble, schist and gneiss. These rocks formed over millennia through the solidification of sandstone, siltstone and limestone—all sediments deposited by westbound rivers flowing from the Sierra Nevada.

Today, Big Sur bridges the flora and fauna of Northern and Southern California, while differing markedly from both regions' Mediterranean climate due to the sheer topography of the Santa Lucia Range. The result is a diverse array of ecosystems, including coastal scrub extending along the coast, chaparral particularly in the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses, redwood forests, riparian (riverside) woodlands, grasslands along the slopes of the Santa Lucia Range, oak woodlands and mixed evergreen forests nestled along deep, dark canyon floors and atop the Santa Lucias' dry, rocky slopes.

Spanish Roots

Thousands of Native Americans lived in the Big Sur region prior to the arrival of the Spanish explorers in the 16th and 17th centuries. They belonged to three separate coastal tribes, each with different languages, religious beliefs and cultures. The Ohlone, also known as the Costanoans, spanned from San Francisco to Point Sur. The Esselen occupied the area between Point Sur and Big Creek and inland to the upper Carmel River and Arroyo Seco watersheds. The Salinan lived



Canyon Falls, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park

from Big Creek to San Carpoforo Creek. The three tribes were mainly hunter-gatherers, relying on a diet of acorns and fish from the ocean and nearby rivers.

Even though Spanish expeditions of California started with Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542, and continued with Sebastian Vizcaino's visits to Carmel and Monterey in 1602, Big Sur remained protected from the Spanish until Gaspar de Portola's second expedition in 1770. It was then that Father Junipero Serra established Mission San Carlos at present-day Carmel River State Beach, along with two other missions east of the Santa Lucia range: Mission San Antonio in the San



Mouth of Big Sur River



Sand Dollar Beach



Soberanes Coastline

Antonio Valley and Soledad in the Salinas Valley. The Spanish brought Ohlones, Esselens and Salinans into the missions, and drastically altered native life in the region.

When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, California became a Mexican state, with Monterey remaining the state capital. The vast mission lands were secularized and divided into livestock “ranchos.” Any law-abiding Mexican Catholic was now eligible to receive land grants. These ranchos still shape land-use patterns around Big Sur: Andrew Molera, Garrapata, and Point Lobos State Parks, and the lands of San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs were carved out from larger ranchos.



Bixby Bridge

After years of tension between Mexican ranch owners, or Californios as they called themselves, and American pioneers immigrating west through the Sierra Nevada, conflict erupted at the outset of the Mexican War. In 1846, the United States seized California. In 1849, gold was discovered at the foothills of the Sierra. On September 9, 1850, California statehood was declared, making it the 31st state in the nation.

Two land grants spanned Big Sur: the 8,984-acre Rancho El Sur, owned by Juan Bautista Alvarado, and the 8,876-acre Rancho San Jose y Sur Chiquito. The 1862 Homestead Act successfully enticed settlers to the Arroyo Seco and Big Sur valleys. Early Homesteaders were self-sufficient: they ran cattle and horses, hunted, made cheese, kept bees, planted orchards and raised poultry, hay and vegetables. They married into already existing Indian and Spanish coastal residents, thus mixing the heritage of the old settlers. Their names and legacies are still present down the coast: Soberanes, Molera, Cooper, Pfeiffer, Castro, Burns and Gamboa.

The Post Legacy

Among Big Sur’s early pioneers, the most remarkable is William Post. In 1848, 13-year-old boy Bill Post arrived in Monterey. A native of Connecticut, he was the son of a retired sea captain, and was himself in love with the sea. Bill had sailed the Atlantic as a cabin boy on *The Brooklyn* before he came ashore at Magdalena Bay with a friend. The next morning, the

two lads found their vessel gone, so they walked barefoot to La Paz, where they got onto *The Mizzen Top*, a government ship heading to Yerba Buena (San Francisco). The boys disembarked at Monterey. Penniless, Bill fished in the bay with an old fisherman, trading his fish in town for a dollar. In 1849, the gold rush started and Bill followed everyone to Sacramento. However, when he returned to Monterey, Post was just as poor as he had left.

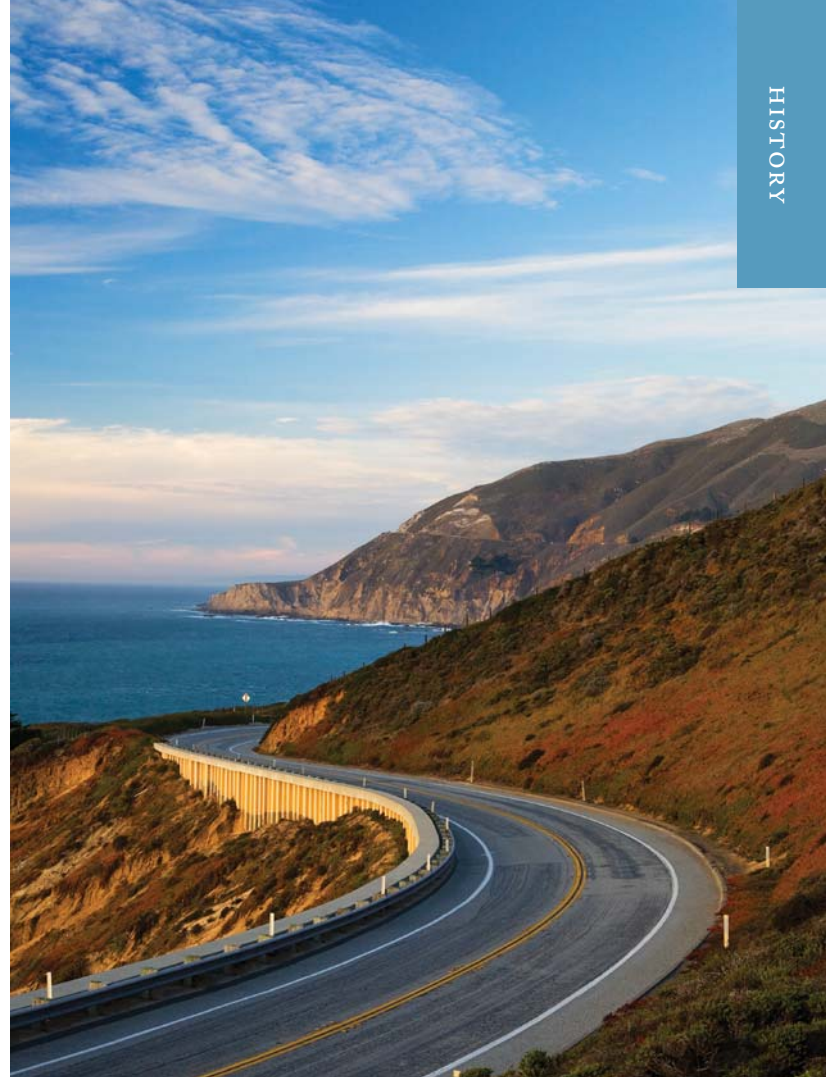
In 1858, he married Anselmo Onesimo, a Rumsen Indian girl from the Carmel Valley. Together, they found a piece of land at Soberanes Creek and decided to head to Big Sur. On March 1, 1859, Charles Francis Post was born in the cabin his father had just finished building. The Posts then had Joseph W. Post in 1862, and later two daughters, Mary and Ellen. Today, the Post legacy is integral to Big Sur. The Post House, located on the Ventana Inn's highway turnoff still remains. The Post Ranch Inn, across on Highway One, is built on Post land.

Beatniks & Hippies

In 1937, Highway One brought the 20th century to Big Sur. Built by convict laborers, the highway paved the way for Big Sur's modern culture of artists, beats, hippies, tourists and yuppies. Henry Miller moved to Big Sur in 1944, and his 1958 *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* inspired a generation of Beat writers to follow in his foot steps. The Hippies followed the Beatniks in the 1960s, thus contributing to Big Sur's bohemian counterculture. While the 1960s are no longer, the culture of New Age Mysticism and experimental psychotherapy still thrives to make Big Sur an all-American haven of modern eclectic nature-attuned spirituality.

Big Sur Today

It wasn't until the early 1950s that electricity arrived in Big Sur, and it still doesn't extend to some of the more remote areas. The region is sparsely populated with about 1,000 inhabitants



Highway One

who are an eclectic mix: descendants of the original settler and rancher families, visitors who never left, wealthy homeowners, artists looking for inspiration and writers seeking tranquility. The mountainous terrain, limited property available for development and environmentally conscious residents have kept the "Big River to the South" predominantly unspoiled—allowing it to remain a romantic, frontier mystique.



Garrapata Beach



Pfeiffer Beach

Landmarks

One of the most dramatic stretches of California coastline, the Big Sur coast, begins in Monterey and ends 90 miles south at Hearst Castle. The drive down Highway One is one of the country's finest, offering stunning views of rugged cliffs, windswept trees and marine life frolicking in the coves and on the beaches. Along this scenic route are numerous landmarks not to be missed.



Hurricane Point View

ACTIVITY KEY

Beaches	Dangerous Surf	Hiking	Museum	Restaurant
Beach Walking	Diving	Historical Sites	Nature Study	Surfing
Boogieboarding	Fee Area	Horseback riding	Natural History	Stores
Campfire	Fishing	Kayaking	No Fishing	Swimming Holes
Camping	Gift Shop	Lodge	Picnics	Tide Pools
Canoeing	Guided Walks	Mountain Biking	Photography	Wildlife viewing

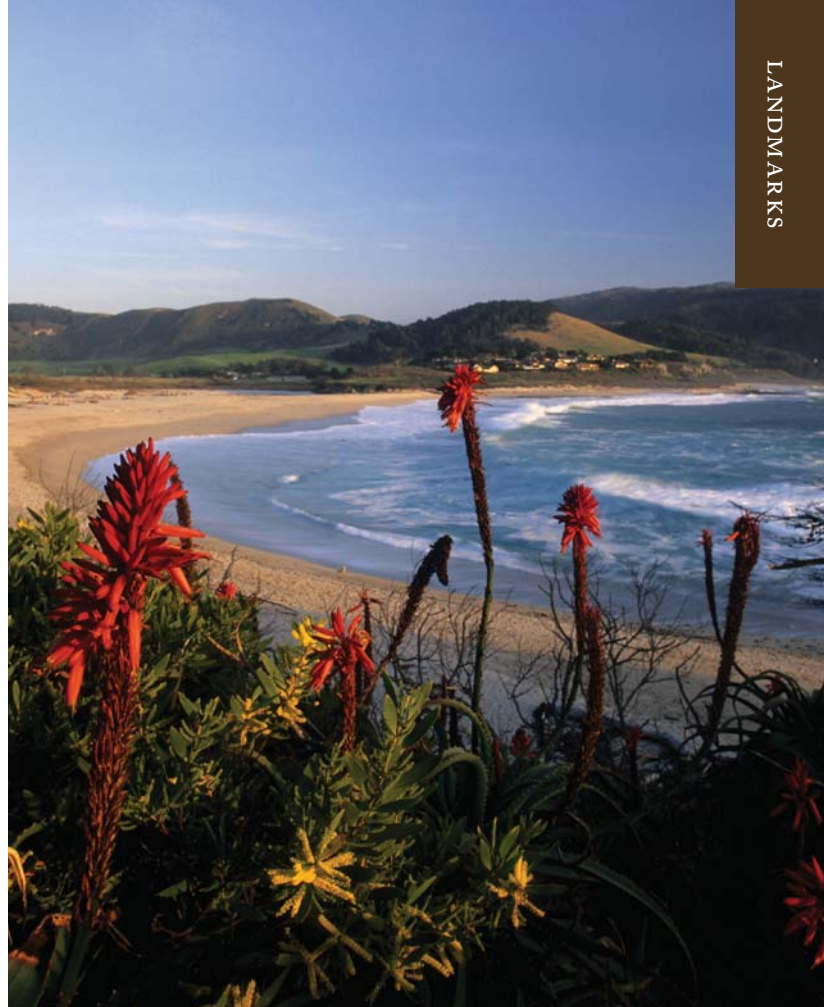
Carmel River State Beach

Looking for a moment with the ocean on your way down from Carmel? This easily accessible beach is the perfect way to start your journey into Big Sur. For the Rumsien (an Ohlone tribe), Carmel River was the center of the world. The river was baptized “Rio del Carmelo” by Sebastian Vizcaino in 1602. Later, Father Junipero Serra chose it for his mission headquarters. Locals divide the beach’s 1.5 miles of shoreline into three sections. Carmel River State Beach is located north of the river mouth. During the dry season, a sandbar blocks the river channel and you can walk all along the park. During the rainy season, however, this northern section is broken off from the southern beaches. Middle Beach spans from the Carmel River to a rocky granite headland to the south. A crucifix marks the highest point in the park. This modern cross commemorates an original one that was once placed by Portola as a ship landmark. The easiest way to access this section of the beach is through a pedestrian gate on Ribera Road in the Carmel Meadows subdivision. The southernmost stretch of coast borders Point Lobos State Reserve, and is named Monastery Beach or San Jose Creek Beach. There is ample parking on the shoulder of Highway One.

HOURS Sunrise to sunset

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 28 miles. Parking at the beach entrance is on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.649.2836; parks.ca.gov



Carmel River State Beach



BEST FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Point Lobos State Reserve
Andrew Molera State Park
Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park
Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park

BEST VIEWS

Garrapata State Park
Pfeiffer Beach
Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park

HIDDEN TREASURE

Garrapata State Park
Limekiln State Park
Jade Cove at Sand Dollar Beach

BEST HIKES

Pfeiffer Falls Trail,
Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park
Headlands Trail,
Andrew Molera State Park
Coast Ridge Road
Pfeiffer Ridge Loop,
Andrew Molera State Park

GREAT FOR A PICNIC

Point Lobos State Reserve
Carmel River State Beach
Andrew Molera Beach
Pfeiffer Beach

Limekiln State Park



Point Lobos State Reserve



Point Lobos State Reserve

Point Lobos is aptly called “The greatest meeting of land and water in the world” by landscape artist Francis McComas. It has long attracted artists, writers and nature lovers with its beautiful landscape of rocky coves, shallow tide pools, broad kelp beds and wind-sculpted pines. Point Lobos has also played a significant role for Native Americans, Chinese fisherman, Japanese abalone harvesters and Portuguese whalers. The park’s 1,250 acres encompass 700 underwater acres and 550 acres of forest trails leading to headlands, white sand beaches and turquoise waters. Point Lobos is a great place to dive or snorkel; however, diving is restricted only to Bluefish Cove and Whalers Cove. You can otherwise stroll down any of the park’s 14 trails, soak in nature, take photos, paint or picnic.

HOURS 8 a.m. until 30 minutes after sunset

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 26 miles. Clearly marked, the entrance is on the west side of the highway. Bicycles are restricted to paved roads.

INFO 831.624.4909; pointlobos.org

Garrapata State Park

Garrapata is one of Big Sur's hidden treasures. While the park is not really hidden (everyone driving down Highway One goes through the park), Garrapata has no official entrance but many gates with understated signs. Situated on 2,879 coastal acres, Garrapata State Park borders Point Lobos State Reserve to the north and Andrew Molera State Park to the south. Created in 1983, the park is one of the most recent additions to the California state park system. During the months of December/January and March/April, Soberanes Point can be a great vantage point to sight south-bound whale migrations during the winter and north-bound during the spring.

HOURS Sunrise to sunset

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 19 miles. The park is located on the west side of the highway. There is no official entrance. Use any of the 19 turnouts to park and access trails. Turnouts are not marked so be sure to count as you go along. To access Garrapata State Beach, use gates 17–19. To access Soberanes Point, use gates 8–10. The park gets crowded quickly during the day, so it's best to arrive early. Bicycles are allowed only on Rocky Ridge Trail.

INFO 831.624.4909; parks.ca.gov



Garrapata State Park



Point Sur Light Station

Point Sur Light Station

The Point Sur Light Station was built in 1889 to provide light warning to ships navigating the Big Sur coast. The lighthouse rises 270 feet above a volcanic rock located at the mouth of the Little Sur River. During the 1960s, the U.S. Coast Guard began automating light houses. Just a short time later, in 1974, the last keeper left the Point Sur Light Station.

HOURS Except for guided tours, the park is closed to the public. Three-hour tours take place on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and on Sundays at 10 a.m. From April through October, tours are added on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. During July and August, additional tours take place on Thursdays at 10 a.m. A few select Moonlight Tours are available (consult website for dates). Tickets are first come, first serve, so be sure to arrive early.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 10 miles. The Point Sur State Historic Park is located on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.625.4419; parks.ca.gov; lighthousefriends.com





Andrew Molera State Park

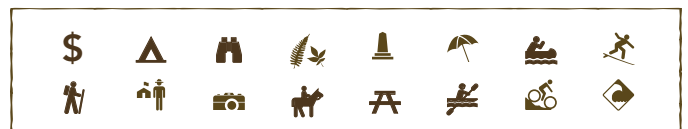
Andrew Molera State Park

With an area of 4,766 acres, Andrew Molera is Big Sur's largest state park. Originally a part of a Mexican land grant known as Rancho El Sur, this park was originally a property of Juan Bautista Alvarado. Andrew Molera was the grandson of Juan Bautista Rogers Cooper, a Monterey sea captain and merchant who bought the land from Alvarado. In 1965, Molera's daughter donated the land to the park system in his name. The park boasts 20 miles of trails that give hikers access to the Big Sur River mouth and estuary, the driftwood-strewn Molera Beach, as well as other vibrant ecosystems. The Ventana Wilderness Society operates The Big Sur Ornithology Lab, a research, habitat restoration and education center as well as a bird observatory. Their focus is primarily on Bald Eagles and Condors.

HOURS Sunrise to sunset

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 7 miles. The entrance is at the junction of the highway and Old Coast Road on the west side. For non-campers, the park is day-use only. Biking is permitted on Ridge, Beach, Trail Camp and Creamery Meadow trails. Horses are not allowed on the Hidden, Headlands or Spring Trails or in Trail Camp. To reserve a guided horseback tour, contact the Ventana reception desk, or call Molera Horseback Tours at 831.625.5486.

INFO 831.667.2315; parks.ca.gov



Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

Big Sur's oldest, most developed and most popular state park, Pfeiffer Big Sur, lies more than a mile inland, along Highway One, and can be a viable escape from the coastal summer fog. This is an excellent place for an easy redwood forest hike or a more demanding climb up Mount Manuel, a picnic or a splash in one of the most beloved Big Sur swimming holes. You must ascend to the top of the peaks for views of the Pacific Ocean.

HOURS Sunrise to sunset

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 2.3 miles. The entrance is on the east side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2315; parks.ca.gov



Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park



Pfeiffer Beach

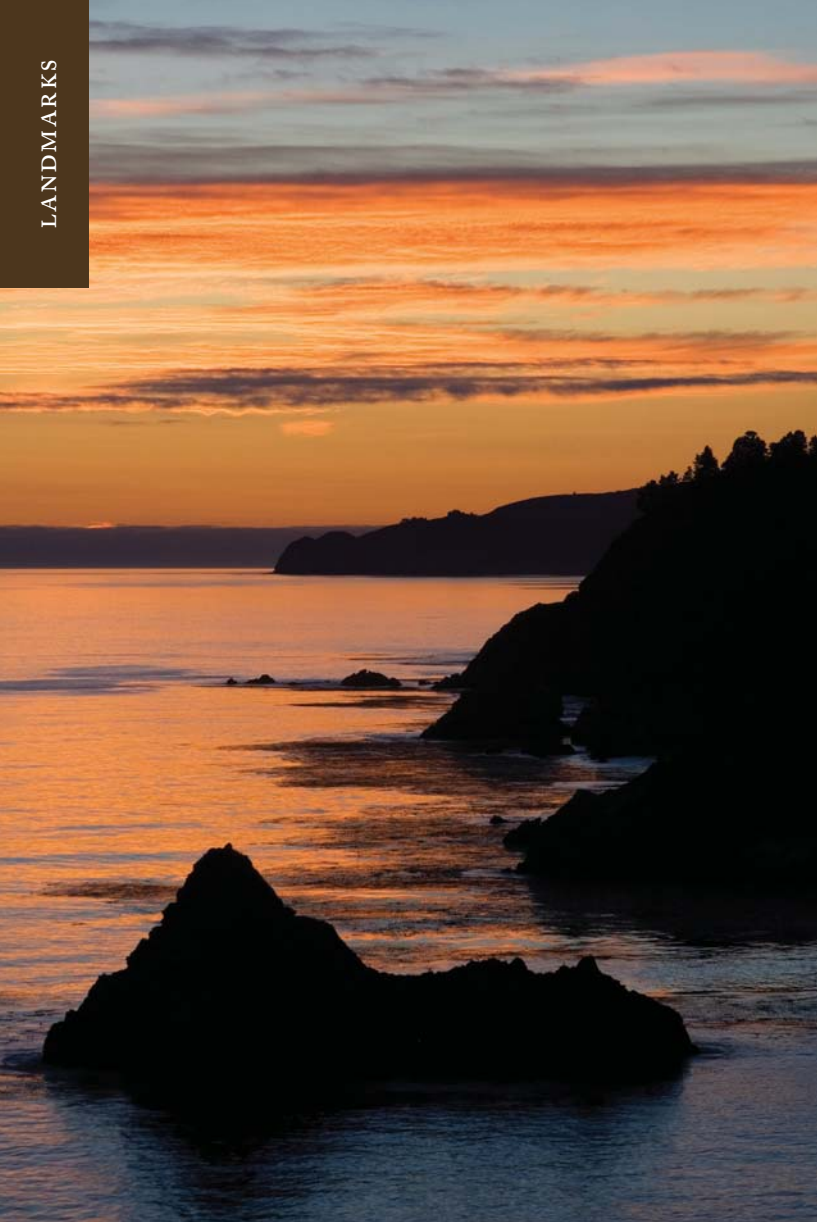
Pfeiffer Beach is one of the finest and most easily accessible beaches in Big Sur. Just one mile away from Ventana, it certainly is the perfect spur-of-the-moment sunset experience. The beach is partly shielded from the ocean by rocks and sea stacks. A cave through one of the largest rocks offers a spectacular way to see the golden reflection of sunset light in contrast with the blue Pacific Ocean. Pfeiffer Beach is part of Los Padres National Forest.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 1.1 miles. Turn off at Sycamore Canyon Road (west side of the highway) to access the beach.



Pfeiffer Beach





Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park



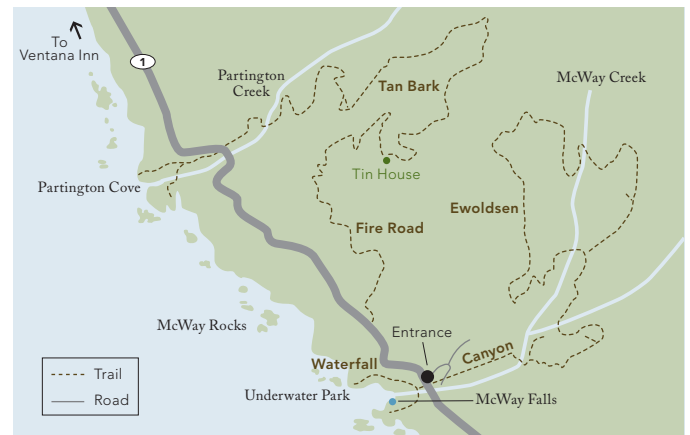
Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park

For an easy hike with breathtaking views for a reward, Julia Pfeiffer would highly recommend this park—a place she frequented herself. Julia Pfeiffer Burns is a respected member of the Pfeiffer family. The Pfeiffers were among the first white settlers in Big Sur, when they arrived here in 1869, with one-year-old Julia. This state park combines the dramatic coastal and mountain features that characterize the ultimate Big Sur experience. Occupying 3.75 square miles, the park features rocky points rising thousands of feet above underwater canyons, with streams flowing down steep gorges that are shaded by ancient redwoods. By McWay Creek is a great place to have a picnic. Then hike down the wheelchair-accessible Waterfall Trail to a viewpoint overlooking spectacular McWay Falls.

HOURS Sunrise to sunset

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 8.8 miles. The entrance is on the east of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2315; parks.ca.gov



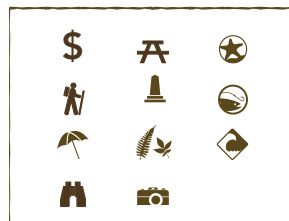
Limekiln State Park

It is easy to overlook this 716-acre park while driving down Highway One, but Limekiln is a great place to stretch your legs on your drive down to Hearst Castle. In addition to the historic limekilns that lend the park its name, this park has another unique feature: it offers one of the few easily accessible entries to a rocky Big Sur beach. There is also a great waterfall not to far from the highway.

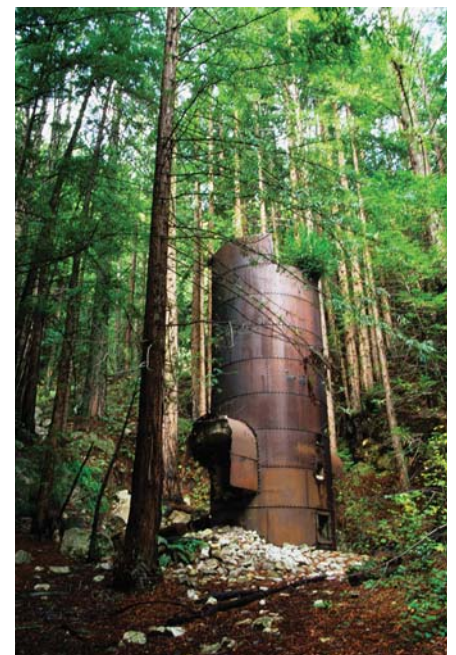
HOURS Daily, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Memorial Day through Labor Day, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 24 miles. The entrance is located on the east side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2403; parks.ca.gov



Limekiln State Park





Jade Cove



Sand Dollar Beach & Jade Cove

Sand Dollar Beach is the longest easily accessible beach along the Big Sur Coast, and considered one of the most beautiful and scenic. Surfing, exploring and fishing are within walking distance of Plaskett Creek campground. The beach is also a designated hang-glider site and features a picnic area and bathrooms. Follow the nearby path on Highway One to Jade Cove, where there are wonderful opportunities for rock-hounding and where you can dive in search of the “stone of heaven,” as the Chinese call it, which ranges in color from light turquoise to deep emerald green.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 31.1 miles. The beach entrance is on the west side of the highway.

Hearst Castle & Hearst Memorial State Beach

Built by media tycoon William Randolph Hearst and architect Julia Morgan, Hearst Castle looks nothing like a castle. La Casa Grande, as Hearst called it, boasts 115 lavish rooms, but after 30 years of construction starting in 1919, it still remains unfinished. Hearst Castle is open for tours daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. Four daytime tours and one evening tour are available. The first tour starts at 8:20 a.m. and the last daytime tour starts at 3:20 p.m. The evening tour starting time varies according to the sunset hour. Contact the front desk for more information regarding booking the tour. Directly across from Hearst Castle on the west side of Highway One is the entrance to Hearst Memorial State Beach, a sandy cove once used as the ocean-front playground for Hearst, his family and friends.

HOURS Tour hours vary. Reservations are required to guarantee the tour, date and time desired.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 70 miles. Hearst Castle sits on a hill on the east side of the highway, and the beach entrance is on the west side of the highway.

INFO 800.444.4445; hearstcastle.org

The Neptune Pool at Hearst Castle



Hikes

From secluded beaches to majestic mountains, expansive state parks to river valleys, and vista points to national forestland, visitors to Big Sur can explore the area's magical beauty by foot, kayak, car or even horseback. Big Sur's varied landscape and awe-inspiring views offer endless opportunities for fun and adventure.



Soberanes Rocky Ridge Trail

RATINGS

- Easy
- Moderate
- ◆ Challenging

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

Sunblock	Sturdy, closed-toe shoes
Insect repellent	Extra layers of clothing
Chapstick	Water (½ liter per hour)
Hat	Snacks or a picnic
Sunglasses	

TRAIL INFORMATION

We provide photocopies of park maps, the Monterey County Walkabout map, and the El Sur Grande newspaper. For updated information on trail closures, call Big Sur Station at 831.667.2315.

Ventana Hikes

Ventana Property Walk

Rating: ● Length: variable

The best way to start any day at Ventana! Every morning at 10 a.m. our Ventana guide leads a one-hour walk around the property. Guests learn about the history of the property, Big Sur and the flora and fauna native to the area. Wildlife viewing may include California condors, eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, and a myriad of other birds. Trees and plants include California redwoods, bay laurel, rosemary, Dalmatian sage, chaparral, and pride of Madeira. During migration season (December/January and April/May) whales can often be spotted from several vantage points on the property.

DIRECTIONS Meet at the lobby at 10 a.m. The loop hike returns to the lobby at 11 a.m.

Big Sur Hikes with Stephen Copeland

Rating: ■ Length: variable

To see Big Sur through the eyes of the best local guide, contact Ventana's reception desk to reserve a hike with Stephen Copeland. For more than 30 years, Steve has been leading hikes in Big Sur. He says he used to be a psychologist, but he might have well been a professional story teller. Trails vary depending on weather conditions and participants' competency levels. Hikes include lunch. For more information and the current fee for Stephen's hikes, please inquire with the Ventana reception desk.

DIRECTIONS Meet at the lobby at 11:20 a.m.

North Coast Ridge Road

Rating: ■ Length: 5 miles

Start the hike on the Ventana Inn path leading to the library. The path becomes North Coast Ridge Road. Continue on the path past the library. The path then becomes Cone Peak Rd. and takes you above and around the Ventana campground. On a clear day, enjoy epic views of Ventana, Post Ranch and as far as the Big Sur Lighthouse.



View of the Pacific Ocean from Ventana

HELPFUL TIPS

- > Let a family member, friend or the front desk know your expected return time for a long excursion
- > Plan your time so that your hike is complete before darkness falls
- > Don't park your vehicle directly beneath cliffs or steep slopes as rocks shift frequently and may damage your car
- > Lock your car and put valuables out of plain view
- > Put your car keys in a zippered pocket
- > Stay on the trail
- > Know what poison oak looks like and take measures to avoid it
- > Be sure of your identification before eating berries, nuts or mushrooms
- > Brush your clothes off if you have been in tall grass or deep brush to remove ticks before they bite you
- > Avoid fording streams deeper than knee deep
- > Light fires in designated areas only
- > Extinguish cigarettes completely before disposal

OUTDOOR ETHICS

- > Don't feed or attempt to closely approach wildlife
- > Leave tidepool organisms undisturbed
- > Leave wildflowers be so they can make seed and more flowers
- > If you must "use the bushes," do so at least 150 feet away from streams; bury what you leave behind

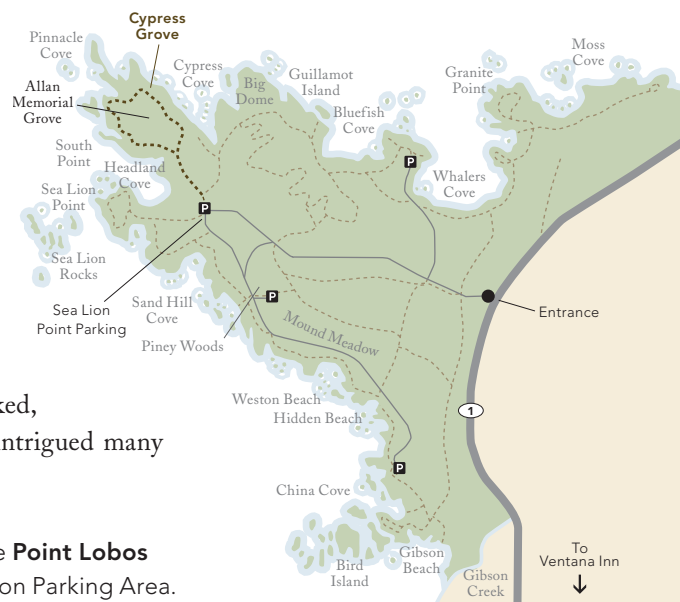
Big Sur Hikes

Cypress Grove Trail

Rating: ● Length: .8 mile loop

This short hike will lead you to the **Allan Memorial Grove**, which is one of the last two remaining areas of Monterey Cypress in the world. With branches growing low and crooked, and roots covered with bright orange lichens, these trees have intrigued many artists and spiritualists.

DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 27 miles. Enter the **Point Lobos State Reserve** on the west side of the highway. Park at the Sea Lion Parking Area.



Monterey Cypress Tree



Gibson Beach, Pt. Lobos

South Shore, Bird Island, South Plateau and Pine Ridge Trails

Rating: ● Length: 2.6 miles

Start this scenic loop on the **South Shore Trail**, which takes hikers to the south-facing shore of Point Lobos. Cross the junction with the **Mound Meadow Trail** to explore more coves, inlets and colorful kelp beds along **Weston Beach**. Continue to **Hidden Beach**, where the South Shore Trail becomes the **Bird Island Trail**. Explore **China Cove** and **Bird Island**, some of the most remarkable destinations within Point Lobos. The Bird Island Trail leads to **Pelican Point**, where hikers can take the **South Plateau Trail** to **Gibson Beach**, a protected wide sand beach. Finally, turn left onto **Pine Ridge Trail**, which takes hikers through a Monterey Pine grove, and left towards **Piney Woods** to return to the South Shore Trail where the hike started.

DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 27 miles. Enter the **Point Lobos State Reserve** on the west side of the highway. Park at the South Shore Trail parking area.

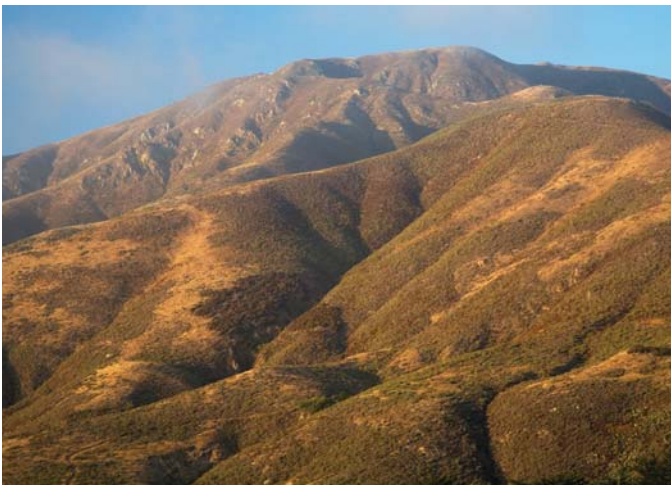
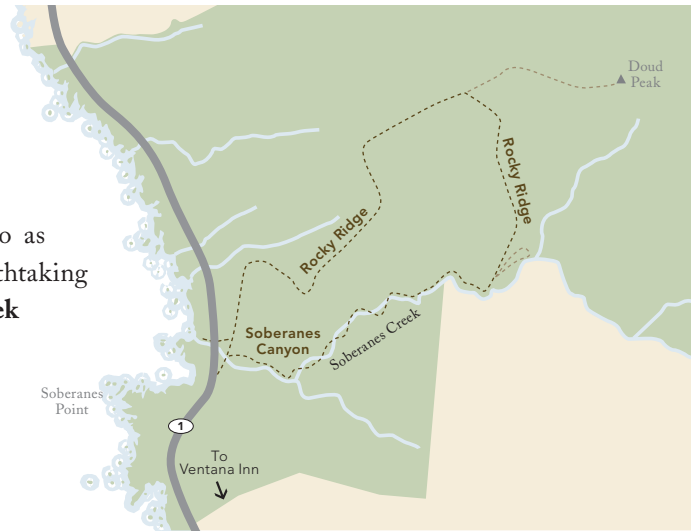


Soberanes Canyon and Rocky Ridge Trails

Rating: ◆ Length: 4.4 miles

Soberanes Canyon shelters groves of the world's tallest living organism, *Sequoia Sempervirens* (or more commonly referred to as California Redwood), while the **Rocky Ridge Trail** offers breathtaking views of the Big Sur coastline. After 1.5 miles, **Soberanes Creek** crosses the Rocky Ridge Trail.

DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 21.7 miles. Part of **Garrapata State Park**, the entrance for both Soberanes Canyon and Rocky Ridge Trails is on the east side of the highway.



View of Rocky Ridge



Andrew Molera Beach

Headlands Trail

Rating: ● Length: 2 miles

The trail starts through a lush riparian habitat alongside the **Big Sur River**. After 0.2 mile, the trail widens as it leads to the spacious walk-in campground. The trail forks 100 feet after the campground. Take a right to get to historic **Cooper Cabin**, the oldest standing structure in Big Sur (built in 1861). Bear left, the trail takes hikers through a dense forest to reach the **Headlands Trail junction**. Bear right and head up the stairs to access breathtaking views of **Molera Point**, **Molera Beach**, and the **Big Sur River Estuary**.

DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 7 miles. Enter the **Andrew Molera State Park** on the west side of the highway. Turn right at the park's entrance. The trailhead is located at the north end of the parking lot.



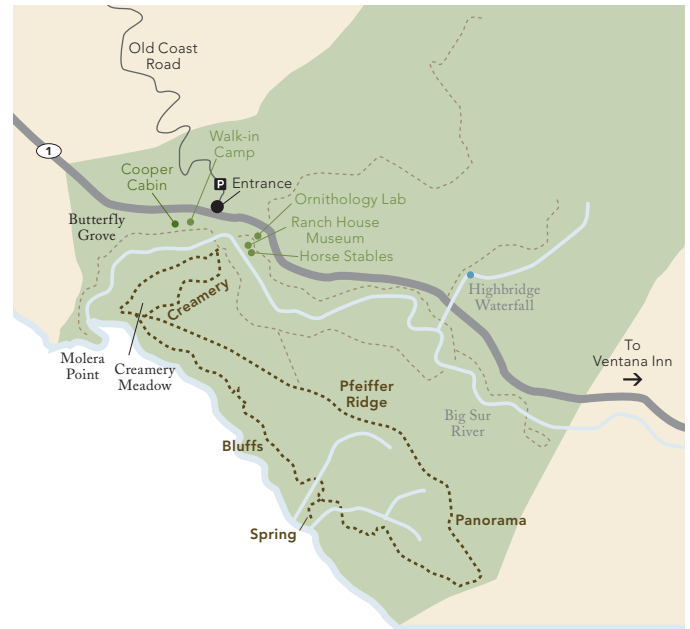


View from Pfeiffer Ridge

Pfeiffer Ridge Loop

Rating: ■ Length: 7.4 miles

This hike affords the most panoramic views of Big Sur with the least climbing. Start by crossing the Big Sur River on the bridge by the parking area, then take the **Creamery Meadow Trail** to the beach. Don't go onto the sand; instead, turn left to take the **Bluffs Trail**, which gives a great vantage point for whale-watching if during whale migration season (December/January and April/May). After 2.4 miles, the Bluffs Trail ends at the **Spring Trail**, which takes you to an isolated beach. Continue south onto the climbing **Panorama Trail** to reach **Pfeiffer Ridge**. Follow the Ridge Trail north until it returns to the Creamery Meadows Trail.



DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 7 miles. Enter the **Andrew Molera State Park** on the west side of the highway. Turn right at the park's entrance.



Pfeiffer Falls Trail

Rating: ● Length: 1.4 miles

This 0.7 mile hike is one of the most popular experiences in Big Sur. You will start at **Pfeiffer Redwood Creek** and will soon reach the **Valley View Trail** junction. If you are seeking a shorter and less steep way to the falls, use the **Pfeiffer Falls Trail**. Passing through an ancient redwood tree forest, you will reach the base of the 60-foot waterfall.

DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 2.3 miles. The **Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park** entrance is on the east side of the highway. Pass the entrance kiosk and follow signs for Pfeiffer Falls.



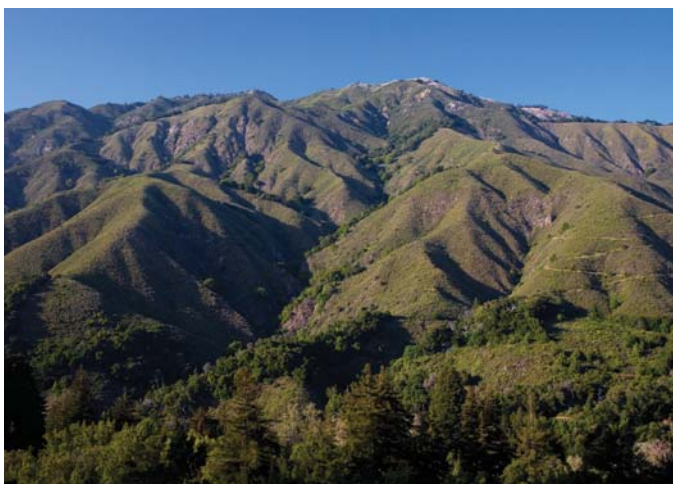
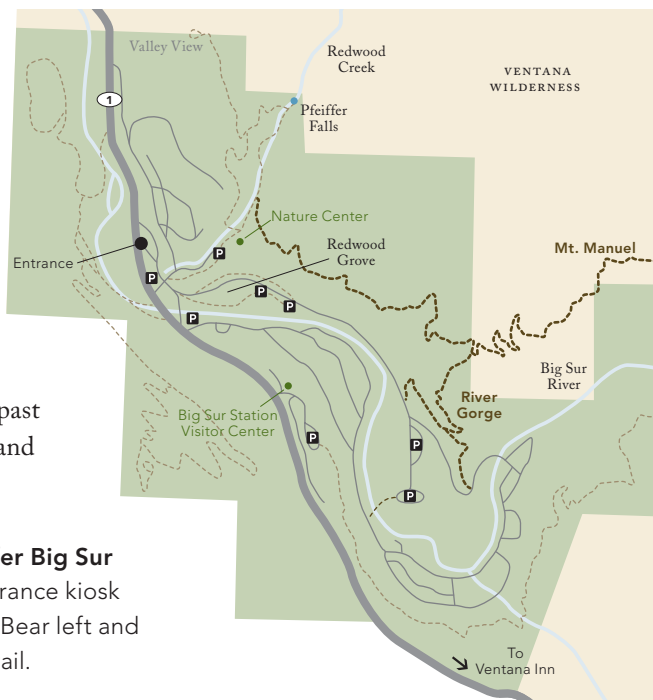
Pfeiffer Falls

Mount Manuel Trail

Rating: ◆ Length: 10.8 miles

This steep trail offers a sweeping view of the **Ventana Wilderness**. Be prepared for the hot weather during the summer. Wear a hat and bring a lot of water. It is advisable to wear pants to avoid ticks and poison oak. The base of the closed paved road across from the parking lot leads to the trailhead for the **Gorge Trail** and the Manuel Peak Trail. Start by going up the service road, which curves at a junction with a dirt road. Stay on the Gorge Trail. Go past John Pfeiffer's Homestead Cabin. Past the cabin, the trail narrows and leads to the **Manuel Peak Trail** junction.

DIRECTIONS Drive north on Highway One for 2.3 miles. The **Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park** entrance is on the east side of the highway. Pass the entrance kiosk and the Big Sur Lodge. Immediately past the lodge, the road forks. Bear left and drive 0.7 mile past the picnic areas. Park at the base of the Gorge Trail.



Mount Manuel



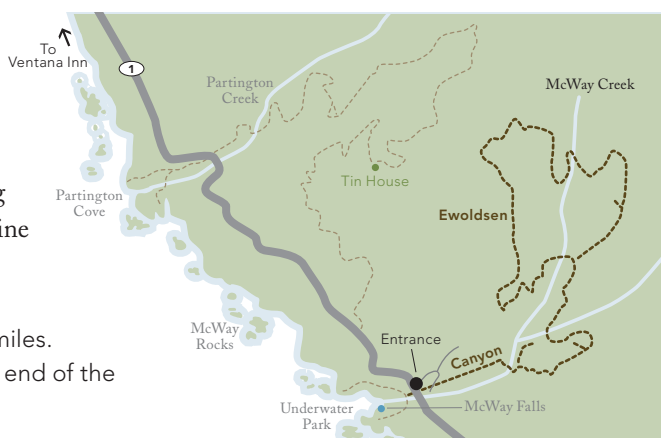
Redwood forest

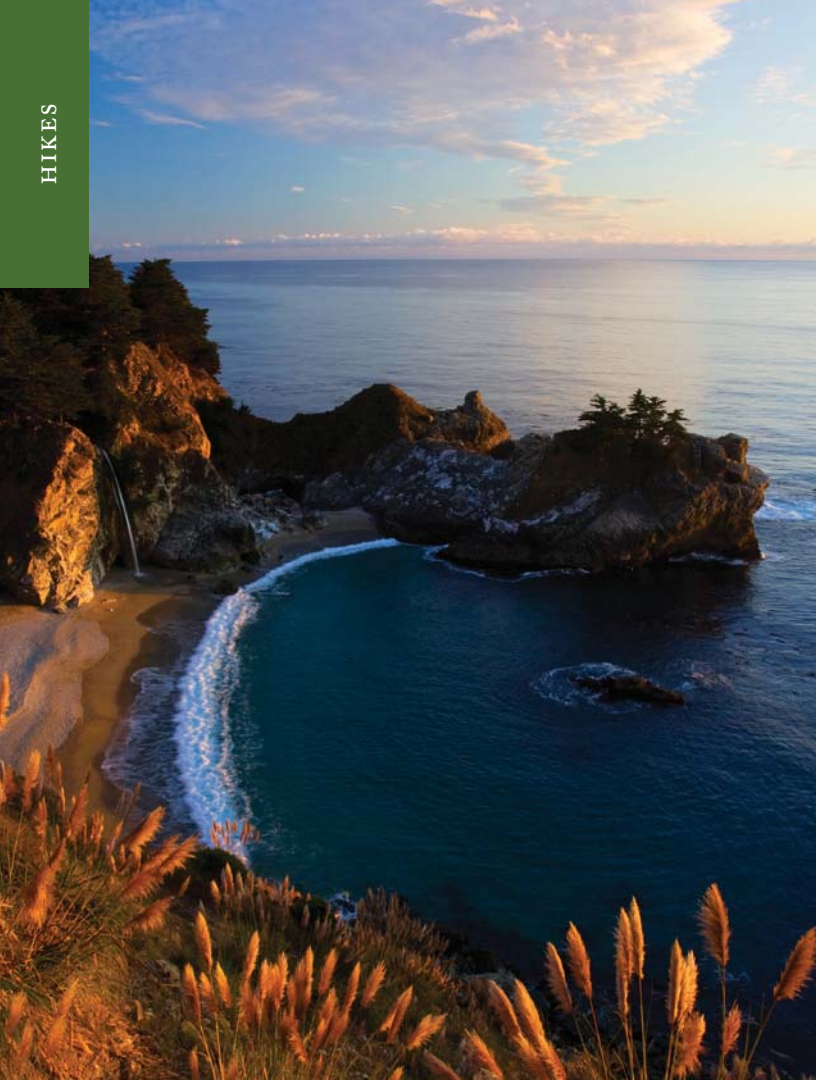
Ewoldsen Trail

Rating: ■ Length: 5.7 miles

This hike along **McWay Creek** offers a complete and gorgeous Big Sur experience, with fine redwood forests and beautiful coastal views. This is a great vantage point for **whale-watching** during the winter and spring. You are lucky if you see one of Big Sur's 27 wild **Condors** soaring in the sky while along the ridgeline atop the Ewoldsen Trail.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 8.8 miles. The trailhead is located in **Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park** at the far end of the upper parking lot on the north side of **McWay Creek**.





McWay Falls

Rating: ● Length: 1 mile

McWay Falls is one of Big Sur's shortest and most spectacular hikes. Follow **McWay Creek** for half a mile to reach the popular view point of the 80-foot McWay Falls, nestled in a cove and plunging over a sandy beach.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 8.8 miles. The trailhead is located in **Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park** on the east end of the main parking lot.

McWay Falls

Wildlife in Big Sur

Big Sur is among one of the last areas of unspoiled coastline in California so wildlife abounds. The wildlife are sharing their natural habitat with us so be sure to give them space. Some of the species, like the California condor, are endangered and protected.

The ocean off the coast of Big Sur is designated a Marine Sanctuary and Sea Otter Refuge. The kelp beds, offshore rocks and waters are home to an abundant marine ecosystem—not to mention migratory visits by blue, gray and humpback whales.



California Condor

MAMMALS

Badger, Black-tailed Mule Deer, Bobcat, Coyote, Gray Squirrel, Gray Whale, Harbor Seal, Mountain Lion, Opossum, Raccoon, Red Fox, Sea Lion, Sea Otter, Skunk, Turkey, Wild Boar

BIRDS

American Crow, Anna's Hummingbird, Brown Pelican, California Condor, California Towhee, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Kite, Oregon Junco, Owl, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Scrub Jay, Stellar's Jay, Turkey Vulture, Western Gull, Woodpecker

REPTILES

Alligator Lizard, California King Snake, Mountain King Snake, Western Fence Lizard, Western Rattlesnake

Outdoor Recreation

On Land

Cycling

Whether on a road bike or a mountain bike, cycling Big Sur is a demanding endeavor. Highway One is well known as one of the top road rides. When it comes to mountain biking, Los Padres National Forest has many challenging trails. For easier rides within proximity from Ventana Inn, try Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park or Andrew Molera State Park. Note: State park trails are closed to bikes unless explicitly stated otherwise. Mountain biking is allowed on the following trails:

- Rocky Ridge Trail in Garrapata State Park
- Old Coast Road between Bixby Bridge and Andrew Molera State Park
- Pfeiffer Ridge Trail in Andrew Molera State Park
- Cone Peak Road between Nacimiento Summit and Cone Peak
- Lake San Antonio

Golf

For golf enthusiasts, Pebble Beach Resort is just an hour away. Ranked the No. 1 Golf Resort in America by *Golf Digest* in 2007, each of the resort's four courses offers unique heritage and breathtaking beauty (by reservation at 800.654.9300).



Cyclists at Garrapata State Park

There are also dozens of other golf courses on the Monterey Peninsula. Consult the Ventana reception desk for recommendations and reservation assistance.

Tennis

For recommendations and reservation assistance, please consult the Ventana reception desk.

Horseback Riding

Discover flower-studded meadows, Redwood groves, bubbling streams and secluded beaches in the historical Andrew Molera State Park on a guided horseback tour with Molera Stables.

INFO 831.625.5486; molerahorsebacktours.com

On Water

Big Sur's rough and exposed coast is not the ideal environment for learning a new water sport or for the inexperienced. If experienced, be prepared with proper equipment, research the tides and wind conditions and use expert, local advice.

Kayaking

Launch sites include Carmel Bay, Molera Beach, and Whalers Cove in Point Lobos State Reserve (by reservation at pt-lobos.parks.state.ca.us). If you don't have your own kayak, Monterey Bay Kayaks offers a variety of tours that explore the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

INFO 800.649.5357; montereybaykayaks.com

Diving

Point Lobos State Preserve has two diving sites: Whalers Cove and Bluefish Cove. Divers experience one of the richest marine

habitats in California, with lush kelp forests, a wide variety of marine animals, and vibrant underwater colors. Reservations are recommended. All divers must register at the reserve entrance. Other sites include Carmel Bay, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park's underwater preserve and Jade Cove.

Surfing

Big Sur's rough breaks and cold water make it less hospitable than surf spots south of Point Conception. Some of the most recognized surf breaks near Big Sur's coastline include Ghost Tree on the Monterey Peninsula, Willow Creek, and the north end of Molera Beach in the Andrew Molera State Park.

Windsurfing & Kiteboarding

The main place to windsurf or kiteboard in Big Sur is the San Simeon Coast. The northern section of the San Simeon State Park has some of the best beaches, and the most famous is Arroyo Laguna.

Destinations

Some say the best part of visiting Big Sur is the option to do nothing at all. Many visitors come to relax and take in the natural beauty while others seek out the art, culture and shopping that is unique to this tranquil coastal retreat.



Henry Miller Library

Big Sur Culture

Henry Miller Library

Fleeing war-ridden France, Henry Miller arrived in Big Sur in 1944 and moved into a home on Partington Ridge. It was there that he wrote many books that were responsible for attracting a whole generation of Beatnik writers and poets to the area. Built in 1966 as an homage to Miller by his personal secretary, Emil White, the library does not actually lend books. Rather, it stores and sells Miller's writings as well as other local writers' books. "Why is it called a library if it doesn't lend books?" It's a great question to ask the library's friendly staff.

The library also serves as a community center, art gallery and outdoor venue for a remarkable array of performances, lectures and concerts—many of which take place in the summer. If you want to tap into some Big Sur culture, inquire about the current events. The library's annual short film festival held each summer is also not to be missed.

HOURS 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Closed Tuesdays)

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 1 mile. The library is on the east side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2574; henrymiller.org



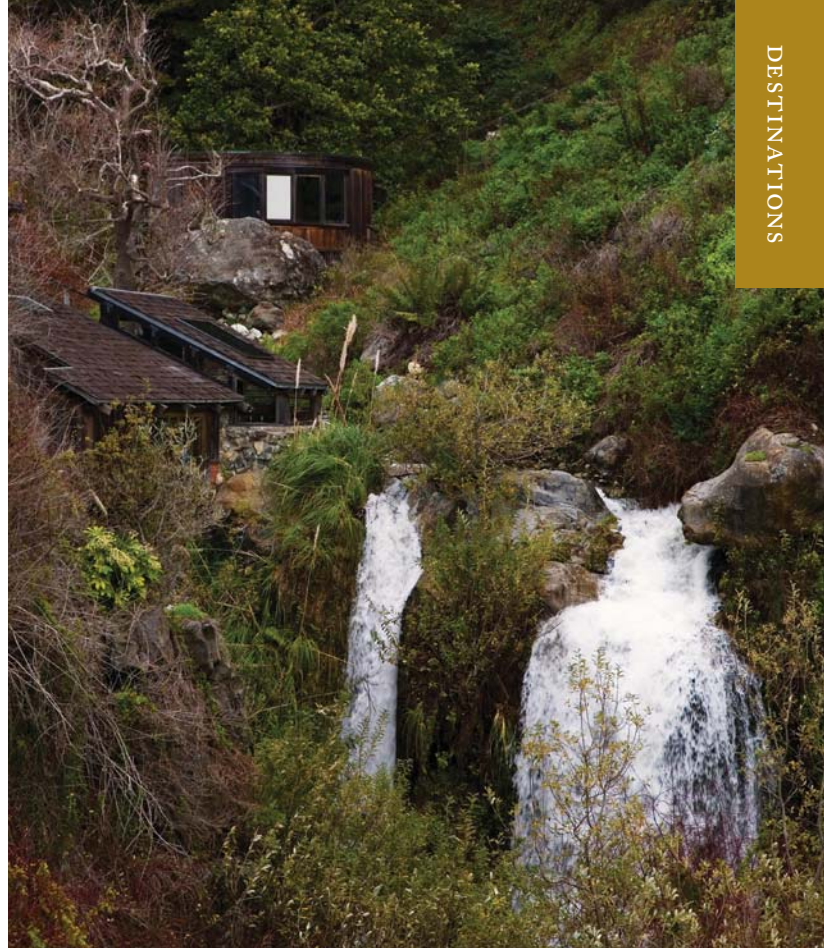
The pool (above) and meditation room (right) at the Esalen Institute

Esalen Institute

No other place has fashioned Big Sur's culture more than Esalen. This institution is an integral aspect of Big Sur's—some would even say America's—history. Founded by Mike Murphy and Dick Price in the early 1960s, Esalen is a retreat center dedicated to the exploration of “Human Potential,” a phrase coined by Aldous Huxley who once taught there. The institute has long been a leader in alternative and experiential education, and the list of renowned figures who have taught seminars here is endless. Henry Miller, Allen Ginsberg, Hunter S. Thompson, Fritz Perls, Alan Watts, Joseph Campbell, Timothy Leary, Gregory Bateson and even Boris Yeltsin have been part of the Esalen programs.

The institute offers seminars and workshops on mysticism, religion, psychology, Gestalt therapy, quantum physics, UFOs, and shamanism, as well as acupressure, art, economics, dance, yoga, massage, bodywork, couples therapy and other topics.

Esalen is well known for its hot springs perched on a cliff above the ocean. The Esalen pools, as the hot springs are called, are available for use only by registered guests. If you are not participating in a seminar, you can either visit Esalen between the



hours of 1 and 3 a.m. (by telephone reservation only) or make a reservation for the famous Esalen massage. You won't be disappointed—Esalen is where massage therapists from all over the world congregate for trainings and workshops.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 12 miles. Esalen's entrance is on the west side of the highway.

NIGHT BATHS 831.667.3047

GENERAL INFO 831.667.3000; esalen.org

SPA APPOINTMENTS 831.667.3002



Galleries & Shops

The Gallery at Ventana

The Gallery at Ventana features exquisite work from local artists and artisans. Take a peek inside and experience for yourself the unique collection of painting, sculpture, jewelry, hand blown glass, stone and wood work, ceramics, basketry and photography. We've carefully selected the very best works from artist's studios in Big Sur and all around Monterey County for your enjoyment. You can also visit the Gallery for sustainably-created Ventana logo wear made of luxuriously soft organic cotton, recycled polyester or bamboo.

HOURS 11:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

DIRECTIONS The Gallery at Ventana is located next to the Restaurant at Ventana.

INFO 831.667.4298, ventanainn.com

Coast Gallery Big Sur

Established in 1958, Coast Gallery was the first gallery in Big Sur. Nestled in a redwood canyon beside a mountain stream high above sea level, this historic landmark houses six galleries and an indoor-outdoor cafe. With over 3,000 art and craft works created by more than 250 local and international artists and artisans, the Coast Gallery is one of the largest galleries of American Crafts in the United States.

HOURS 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for about 3 miles. The gallery is on the east side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2301; coastgalleries.com

Hawthorne Gallery

This gallery represents the work of local artists Gregory Hawthorne, Barbara Spring, Albert Paley, Frederick Gregory and other renowned artists, with one-of-a-kind contemporary paintings, sculpture, blown glass, ceramics and jewelry.

HOURS 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 0.7 miles. The gallery is on the east side of the highway across for Nepenthe.

INFO 831.667.3200; hawthornegallery.com

Heartbeat Gift Gallery

This family-owned gallery features an eclectic variety of unusual, exotic jewelry, clothing and collectibles from Big Sur and from around the world.

HOURS 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.



The Gallery at Ventana

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 3 miles. The gallery is located in the Big Sur River Inn complex on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2557; heartbeatbigsur.com

The Phoenix Shop

In the same way that Nepenthe has been the most important meeting place for the Big Sur community, The Phoenix has become Big Sur's largest store and is one of the best gift shops along the California coast. The shop has a great collection on Big Sur and health and spirituality, as well as jewelry, clothing, bodycare products, toys and musical instruments.

HOURS 10:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 1 mile. The shop is located under Nepenthe on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2347; nepenthebigsur.com

Post Ranch Mercantile

The Post Ranch Mercantile sells tableware, home accessories and bedding, natural clothing and bodycare products, as well as Post Ranch Inn branded souvenirs.

HOURS 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

DIRECTIONS The shop is located inside the Post Ranch Inn across the street from Ventana's driveway.

INFO 831.667.2795; postranchmercantile.com

Big Sur also offers these fine galleries:

Del Campo Gallery

831.667.2618; delcampogallery.com

Local Color

831.667.0481; bigsurlocalcolor.com

Carmel-by-the-Sea

Carmel-by-the-Sea has a rich history in California art and architecture, and has been a mecca for artists, photographers, writers and actors. In the quaint European-style village of just one square mile, there are more than 100 galleries. The myriad of shopping options include **Carmel Plaza** and the stores lining the famed **Ocean Avenue**. In addition, the **Barnyard** and **Crossroads** shopping centers are located just off Highway One near Rio Road. Throughout the year, there are many diverse festivals and events. One historic building of note is the Carmel Mission Basilica.

INFO carmelcalifornia.org

Carmel Mission Basilica

The Carmel Mission was founded by Father Junipero Serra on August 24, 1771. When Serra died in 1784, the Mission was still a humble adobe structure. Father Fermin Lasuen, Serra's successor, completed the construction of the buildings you see there today. With the labor of the Rumsien, the local Costanoan tribe, and the guidance of Manuel Ruiz, a master Mexican stonemason, Father Lasuen built what is considered to be the most beautiful of California's mission chapels.

HOURS Monday – Saturday, 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.;
Sunday, 10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One. After you cross the Carmel River Bridge, turn west on Rio Road, and drive 0.7 mile to the corner of Lausen Drive.

INFO 831.624.3600; carmelmission.org



Carmel Mission Basilica



The Farm Stand at Earthbound Farm

Carmel Valley

The rolling ranch land of Carmel Valley was once the home of many dairies, ranches and farms. In the case of Earthbound Farm, it is still is. But most of the historic family properties have since evolved into eclectic shopping villages, world-class golf courses, unique resorts and award-winning wineries.

INFO carmelvalleychamber.com; montereywines.org

Earthbound Farm

Set on a 30-acre organic farm, the casual and welcoming Farm Stand and Organic Kitchen offer farm-fresh produce, freshly prepared organic entrées and special events, including harvest walks and garlic braiding workshops.

HOURS Monday – Saturday, 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.;
Sunday 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One to Carmel. Turn right at Carmel Valley Rd; drive east for 3.5 miles.

INFO 831.625.6219; ebfarm.com

Bernardus Vineyards & Winery

For some of the best Central California wines, visit the tasting room at Bernardus. Since the early 1970s, Dutch winemaker Ben Pon has been growing Bordeaux-style varieties and has been producing exceptional vintages of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Sauvignon Blanc.

HOURS 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 43.2 miles; turn right on Carmel Valley Rd. for 11.7 miles.

INFO 800.223.2533; bernardus.com

Monterey

Monterey has much to offer anyone who wants to dip into California's history, including several museums, more than thirty carefully preserved historic buildings, Old Fisherman's Wharf, the legendary Cannery Row, and the world-renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium. The city also boasts a lush urban forest, beautiful gardens and special events throughout the year.

INFO mpcc.com

Old Fisherman's Wharf

Historic Old Fisherman's Wharf on Monterey Harbor features a myriad of restaurants, seafood, unique shops, whale watching, fishing, bay cruises, theatre and the sights and sounds of Monterey's past.

HOURS Varies

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 30.9 miles. Take exit 399B toward Monterey. Merge onto Munras Avenue. Stay straight to go onto Abrego Street. Turn slight right onto Washington Street. Turn left onto Lighthouse Avenue. Old Fisherman's Wharf will be on the right hand side.

INFO montereywharf.com

Cannery Row

This historic waterfront district made famous by author John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* offers a wealth of attractions, recreation, nightlife, accommodations, and restaurants. Shopping is an ocean-view treasure hunt that invites you to lose yourself in an eclectic blend of specialty shops and galleries.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 45.8 miles. Take exit 399B toward Monterey for 0.4 miles. Merge onto Munras Ave. Turn left on Soledad Dr. Turn right on Pacific St. Merge on Lighthouse Ave. Turn right at Foam St. Turn right at Reeside Ave. Reeside turns left and becomes Cannery Row.

INFO canneryrow.com

Monterey Bay Aquarium

The Monterey Bay Aquarium is one of the largest and most respected aquariums in the world. It has an annual attendance of 1.8 million visitors and holds an astounding 35,000 plants and animals representing 623 species.

HOURS 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily (Closed Christmas)

DIRECTIONS See directions above. The Aquarium is located at the end of Cannery Row.

INFO 831.648.4800; mbayaq.org



Moon jellies at the Monterey Bay Aquarium

La Mirada Museum

La Mirada is the city's crown jewel with its magnificent gardens surrounded by picturesque stone walls. Located in one of Monterey's oldest neighborhoods, La Mirada began as a modest stone adobe during the Mexican Period. It was later remodeled into an elegant home and estate where the great stars of the silent film era were entertained. Today visitors will experience the same charming, exquisitely furnished home with its ambiance of early California. The Dart Wing, designed by renowned architect Charles Moore, features four breathtaking galleries with spectacular views of the gardens and Monterey Bay.

HOURS Wednesday – Saturday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sunday, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (Closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 30.9 miles to the Monterey exit (Fremont St.). A quarter mile after first stoplight, turn left on Via Mirada (look for La Mirada sign). Museum entrance is on the right at 720 Via Mirada.

INFO 831.327.3689; montereyart.org

For an outdoor shopping mall excursion, visit:

De Monte Center

831.373.2705; delmontecenter.com

Dining

Fresh, seasonal ingredients from local farmers' markets. The fusion of a myriad of cooking styles. Beautiful presentation. These are the defining elements of California cuisine. Add in the magical and awe-inspiring setting of Big Sur. What you are rewarded with are truly authentic and unique dining experiences.



The Restaurant at Ventana

The Restaurant at Ventana

Formerly known as Cielo, The Restaurant at Ventana relaunched in September 2009 following an extensive renovation after being damaged in a structural fire in August 2008.

The restaurant features a local farmers' market tasting menu that lets diners experience a variety of seasonal flavors from Big Sur and California's Central Coast region. À la carte dinner entrées showcase naturally-raised meats (no growth hormones or antibiotics) and sustainably-caught seafood, the latter in

accordance with sourcing guidelines set forth by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program. Dishes are created to pair with the restaurant's award-winning wine list. The lunch menu subtly reinterprets casual fare, including salads, sandwiches, and a few perennial classics that have been popular with guests.

HOURS Lunch: Noon – 3 p.m. Mid-Day: 3 – 5 p.m.
Dinner: 6 – 9 p.m. Reservations strongly recommended.

INFO 831.667.4242; ventanainn.com/dining

Big Sur Roadhouse

Delicious California cuisine with fresh, local ingredients, using a variety of housemade products. In keeping with their Big Sur ethos, the seasonal menu is filled with locally-sourced organic ingredients.

HOURS Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., Lunch: 11:30 a.m. – 2:45 p.m., Small Bites Menu: 4 p.m. – 9 p.m., Dinner Menu: 5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Call for reservations.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 3.6 miles. The entrance is on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2370;
<http://www.glenoaksbigsur.com/roadhouse.html>

Deetjen's

Sit by candlelight and listen to classical music while you dine in this quaint and quirky old-world, Big Sur setting. The organic menu changes often and reflects what is seasonably available.

HOURS Breakfast: 8 a.m. – noon. Dinner: from 6 p.m.
Reservations recommended.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 1.7 miles. The entrance is on the east side of the highway. Note: The sign reads Big Sur Inn.

INFO 831.667.2377; deetjens.com



Terrace dining at The Restaurant at Ventana

Sierra Mar

Overlooking the Pacific Ocean with a spectacular view of the California coast, Post Ranch Inn's restaurant serves world-class cuisine with an award-winning wine selection in an awe-inspiring setting. Sierra Mar features an innovative lunch and four-course, prix-fixe menu, which changes daily and utilizes organic, seasonal fare.

HOURS Lunch: 12:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Reservations requested. Dinner: 5:30 – 9 p.m., reservations typically accepted for outside guests 5:30 p.m. & 8:45 p.m.

DIRECTIONS Located across the street from Ventana's driveway. Be careful crossing the highway.

INFO 831.667.2800; postranchinn.com

Big Sur Bakery & Restaurant

The best bread in town hands down. The Big Sur Bakery offers gourmet sandwiches and baked goods for lunch. For dinner, the restaurant has gained everyone's vote for the best quality in a casual setting.

HOURS Bakery: daily from 8 a.m. Dinner: 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. daily. Brunch: Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Closed Monday.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 0.3 miles. The entrance is on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.0520; bigsurbakery.com

Big Sur River Inn

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served daily by a huge stone fireplace or on a deck overlooking the Big Sur River. Plus, enjoy live entertainment on Sunday afternoons.

HOURS Breakfast: 8 – 11 a.m. Lunch: Noon – 5 p.m. Dinner: 5 – 8 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive north on Highway One for 4.2 miles. The entrance is on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2700; bigsurriverinn.com

Nepenthe

Sitting high above the Pacific and watched over by the majestic Santa Lucia Mountains, Nepenthe has long been a mecca for poets, artists, travelers and vagabonds. Homemade desserts and the Ambrosia burger keep guests coming back for more.

HOURS Open daily, 11:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Ventana, drive south on Highway One for 1 mile. The entrance is on the west side of the highway.

INFO 831.667.2345; nepenthebigsur.com

Romance

Everything about Big Sur exudes romance. Heart-pounding views. Intoxicating scents of the forest. Quiet meandering trails. Stars so close it feels as though you can touch them. Here are some of our favorite romantic suggestions...



Pfeiffer Beach

Jade Hunting at Jade Cove

You won't pick this precious stone at a jewelry store. The best precious stones in life are free, and picking them promises to be your most memorable hunting experience.

Couple Portraits in Big Sur

Looking for some romantic photographs to commemorate this memorable journey? Let our Ventana Photographer lead you to the best backdrops in Big Sur.

Sunset at Pfeiffer Beach

The simple pleasure of sitting on one of the most spectacular and serene beaches in the area watching the sun set over the ocean.

Soaking in the Esalen Hot Springs

Not sleepy? Drive to Esalen between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. For a small fee, you can jump naked in these therapeutic hot springs perched on a cliff over the Pacific Ocean.

Horseback Riding

Watch the sun setting over the ocean as you ride gallant horses on beautiful Molera Beach.

Picnic at Garrapata Beach

Allow The Restaurant at Ventana to prepare a picnic lunch to pair with your favorite bottle of wine which you can enjoy all alone on a spectacular beach.



VENTANA

BIG SUR

48123 Highway One, Big Sur, CA 93920

T 831.667.2331 R 800.628.6500

ventanainn.com

COMMUNE

HOTELS + RESORTS

Ventana Inn & Spa is managed by Commune Hotels & Resorts