



The Best of CA Highway 1: Top Hidden Gems for Beach Lovers and History Buffs In Oceano and Nipomo

Explore the roots of the CA Central Coast, Find the only CA State Beach you can Drive On, Explore Hollywood History at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dune Center, See Thousands of Monarch Butterflies, Enjoy Miles of Unspoiled Beaches and Go Back in Time at the Oceano Train Depot and The Rancho Nipomo Dana Adobe

February 1, 2017- San Luis Obispo County, CA – Oceano and Nipomo are genuine California beach towns at the edge of the largest sand dunes complex in the state found along California’s Highway 1 Discovery Route covering 101 miles of stunning shoreline and incredible journeys along Coastal San Luis Obispo County. There are must-see spots all along the way that immerse travelers in history and culture and help them find the locals favorite hang outs.

Nipomo Must-See Spots

Nipomo is home to three world-class golf courses, flower-filled greenhouses and orchards laden with citrus and avocados, and fields of strawberries and flowers. Situated as the first town in San Luis Obispo County when traveling on Highway 101, locals proudly proclaim “The Central Coast Starts Here!” Nipomo offers a quaint old downtown featuring the deliciously world-famous Jocko’s Steak House.

- **[Rancho Nipomo Dana Adobe](#)**

Standing in a grove of stately Eucalyptus trees on Nipomo Mesa is a 13-room adobe residence built by Captain William Goodwin Dana in 1840. Restoration efforts have restored this gracious home to much of its original splendor. Burros and other farm animals from the great Rancho era can still be found here, along with costumed docents, antique farm implements, and historians who will gladly guide you through the fascinating history that is pure California. The Dana Adobe is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays, from 1pm to 4pm, and during the week by appointment.

- **[Monarch Butterfly Grove](#)**

From late October to February, thousands of black and gold Monarch butterflies cluster in the limbs of a Eucalyptus grove at Trilogy Monarch Dunes in Nipomo, providing us with a breathtaking glimpse of nature in all her vibrant glory. The count was 20,000 in December of 2016. Many of these fragile butterflies fly more than 1,000 miles, braving harsh weather conditions before coming to roost in the protected grove for the winter. The grove is open year-round with an interpretive trail. The Butterfly Habitat is open year round from sunrise to sunset and is free to all. Please park in the paved parking lot at 1610 Kingston Drive, which is immediately adjacent to the butterfly sanctuary. A wheel chair/stroller accessible paved path provides a short easy walk into the main cluster area. Picnic tables and trash receptacles are available. A public horse trail encircles the nineteen acre habitat, with hitching posts provided near the picnic area. There are no restroom or drinking water facilities on site. February 6, 2017 is the official [California Western Monarch Day](#). The Monarch Butterfly Grove at Pismo State Beach plans a joyful celebration that day from 10:00am – 2:00pm filled with special butterfly talks and educational booths for adults, as well as fun art activities for children. The main attraction, the thousands of Monarchs that hang in huge clusters from the eucalyptus and pine trees in the grove.

- [The Luffa Farm](#)

Nestled on the hidden mesa in Nipomo, The Luffa Farm is one of the only growers of luffa sponges in the USA and it's open to the public. The Luffa Farm is a family operation that grows and sells natural luffa sponges. They also specialize in handmade natural bath bombs, bath salts, and bath teas, along with handmade natural glycerin soaps and lotions. Visitors delight in the fun and educational free tours. They also appreciate the products grown naturally in the central coast sunshine using the farm's special heirloom luffa seeds, making the luffa sponges uniquely soft, luxurious, and inviting.

- [Guadalupe – Nipomo Dune Center](#)

The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex is comprised of 18 miles of coastline and is one of the most ecologically significant and largest intact coastal dune ecosystems on earth. A significant portion of the nearly 22,000 acres is under public management and open for recreation. In 1923, pioneer filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille built the largest set in movie history in the dunes near Guadalupe, CA, for his silent epic, *The Ten Commandments*. After filming was complete, DeMille ordered that the entire set be dismantled and secretly buried in the dunes. And there it lay, forgotten, for the next 60 years and it still sits there, buried in the sand, known as the "Lost City of Cecil B. DeMille." The Dunes Center was originally conceived by a group of concerned citizens and in 1989 The Nature Conservancy's efforts to help preserve and restore the Guadalupe Beach and Oso Flaco Lake Natural Areas. At the Dunes Center there is a unique and fascinating exhibit featuring a variety of artifacts from the both the set and the people who worked on the production. We feature a short film on the recovery effort of the set, the people involved in that process and have information, including a booklet focused on the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes film history.

In addition, visitors can enjoy Stewardship Travel learning experiences including docent led hikes and/or donating to help maintain the restoration programs throughout The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex. The Dunes Center has a thriving education program, reaching over 4000 students annually.

- [Oso Flaco Natural Area](#)

Let your senses come alive at one of the most scenic natural areas along California's coast, Oso Flaco Lake, located just southwest of Nipomo. Join a docent led hike or explore on your own. [Oso Flaco Lake](#) is at the southernmost part of the Oceano Dunes State Park. Having come to see dunes, you might be surprised to find yourself in this beautiful wooded area that ends at an incredible boardwalk bridge that takes visitors out over the lake. At the end of the boardwalk you will find a viewing platform with views of the entire San Luis Bay from Point San Luis in the north, to Mussel Rock in the south.

Oceano Must See Spots

Oceano is an authentic California beach town at the edge of the largest dunes complex in the state. The Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area is the only place in California where visitors may drive on the beach and enjoy the area's diverse recreation opportunities, from ATV cruising and horseback riding to surf and kayak fishing. The historic Oceano Train Depot served as a classic Type 22 train depot until 1973, and is now a museum filled with a plethora of railroad artifacts.

- [Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area](#)

Don't settle for just sunbathing, drive your car onto the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and cruise the beach in an all new way. Formerly Pismo Dunes SVRA, this sand dune complex is geologically unique and also provides an impressive playground for off-highway enthusiasts. One of several OHV areas administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Oceano Dunes also offers visitors other recreational activities such as swimming, surfing, fishing, camping, surf fishing,

and hiking. The staff at Oceano Dunes is there to help guide your adventure and wishes you an enjoyable and safe stay.

- [**The Great American Melodrama & Vaudeville**](#)

The Great American Melodrama & Vaudeville is a professional non-Equity theatre located in Oceano. It first opened its doors in the summer of 1975, and has been operating year round since 1976. Performances at the Melodrama are fun for the whole family. Guests arrive and are ushered to their seats to the sounds of live, honky-tonk style piano. Each night, a two act play is performed – typically comedies, musicals, and spoofs – followed by an original vaudeville revue stuffed with song, dance, and comedy. As the theatre’s name suggests, many shows are performed in a classic melodramatic style, with patrons encouraged to cheer the hero and boo the villain. An evening at the Melodrama promises affordable fun and laughs for all ages.

- [**Oceano Train Depot and Museum**](#)

The Oceano Train Depot is in near-original condition as when it was in use and is open for tours of this turn-of-the-century train depot that remains virtually untouched. The Oceano Depot was once the most important building in South San Luis Obispo County as all passenger, freight, telegraph, and mail service passed in and around the Depot. As an important part of Oceano History, the community came together to make sure it was restored and preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Housed inside the walls are not only artifacts from the railroad, but historical photos and artifacts from the community itself dating back to the early 1900's. Railroad buffs and old timers love to tell their stories of working on the railroad and give instructions and the history on the equipment and railroad artifacts on display. When school children visit, they are enthralled with the old post office boxes, coffee grinder, jukebox, and things of yesteryear. The Depot is open to the public on Sundays from 1pm to 3pm and by appointment at (805) 489-5446. Model Railroad and Historic Depot Restoration Days is held the last weekend in January each year from 10am to 4pm both Saturday and Sunday, with restoration activities from 2pm to 4pm.

Plan for a memorable rural road trip or vacation in Oceano and Nipomo and [download the Oceano and Nipomo Road Trip Map](#) to check out these must-see spots.

Enter to Win the Oceano and Nipomo Must-See Getaway

Immerse yourself in these hidden gems with by entering to win the Must-See Getaway Contest. It’s easy. [Just fill out this form](#) and you could be selected to win two nights, three-days in this historic destination along the CA Highway 1 Discovery Route plus two tickets to the world famous Melodrama.

Lodging Options

Oceano and Nipomo are authentic California beach towns, perfect for your Central Coast vacation. Oceano lodging offers vacations for every budget and every traveler with an array of lodging accommodations from Hotels, B&Bs and Vacation Rentals. Enjoy your own private vacation suite where luxury extends all the way to the water's edge at the [Pacific Plaza Resort Hotel](#). Located at beautiful Pismo State Beach, offers a vacation experience that will relax your body and soothe your mind. The [Oceano Inn](#) is family-owned and operated, centrally located just four blocks from the Oceano Dunes at the corner of Pacific Coast Highway 1 and Pier Avenue near Pismo Beach. Check out [Oceano’s many vacation rentals](#), many right on the beach! Discover the best of Highway 1 for yourself by staying in Oceano and Nipomo!

Dining

Oceano Dining offers family style dining to an exotic food experience. Oceano restaurants will satisfy a wide

range of food expectations. Start your day at [The Mayor's Place](#) for breakfast. Don't let the facade fool you, a stop at The Mayor's Place is well worth it. The contemporary yet relaxed [Adelina's Bistro & Market Place](#) serves regional cuisine made fresh daily using the best local, organic produce. Expect a hand-picked selection of superb Central Coast wines along with a sophisticated and fun atmosphere. Vegetarians beware: [Jocko's Steakhouse](#) is all about meat - big, juicy steaks and chops, grilled to sizzling perfection on a fragrant oak-pit barbecue with all of the Western trimmings. If you yearn for great steak or have heard the stories about Santa Maria-style barbecue, this is the place! Meantime, the [California Grill Nipomo](#) is an all-American restaurant serving California style grub such as burgers, sandwiches, salads and more. Come in to [Pi-Whole Pizzeria](#) and try the famous Lava Bombs. Is it a calzone? Is it a sandwich? Come in and decide for yourself!

Events

The communities of Oceano and Nipomo know how to celebrate life and they invite guests to join the fun. You'll find lots of music events, concerts, group nature hikes and ways to get out on the water. Check [here](#) for a list of the upcoming events.

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About the California Highway 1 Discovery Route – The Best of Highway 1

Midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, approximately a 3-4 hour drive from each, in beautiful coastal San Luis Obispo County, an amazing number of 'must-see' and 'must-do' destinations can be found along the [California Highway 1 Discovery Route](#). With 10 uncrowded beaches, 12 state parks, the Hearst Castle, three bountiful wine regions, restaurants featuring farm-to-table cuisine, unique wildlife habitats and more, the 101-mile stretch offers the best of Highway 1. Everything you could want for a relaxed and inspiring vacation can be found here including 500 lodging choices. Take an iconic road trip and enjoy breathtaking views through 10 diverse artisan towns and charismatic seaside villages along prime Pacific coastline. These scenic rural road trips are rich in character and history. Leaders in Stewardship Travel, the California Highway 1 Discovery Route offers 70 brief, award-winning experiences that enhance visitor's immersion in the natural and cultural heritage of California's central coast. There's also amazing Wildlife Viewing from bird watching, elephant seals, and sea otters, to seals, whales, monarch butterflies and more.

Experience fun and relaxing rural road trips through the 'Perfect 10' CA Highway 1 Discovery Route destinations: [Ragged Point](#) & [San Simeon](#), [Cambria](#), [Cayucos](#), and [Los Osos/Baywood Park](#), to [Avila Beach & Valley](#), [Edna Valley](#), [Arroyo Grande Valley](#), [Oceano](#) and [Nipomo](#). Every January and February, the towns along the California Highway 1 Discovery Route celebrate Coastal Discovery & Stewardship, offering unique lodging packages, coastal activities, events and entertainment. For the latest news on the best of Highway 1 join us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/Highway1DiscoveryRoute> and follow us on Twitter twitter.com/Hwy1DiscoveryRt and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/highway1discoveryroute/>

For more information on the **California Highway 1 Discovery Route**, visit www.Highway1DiscoveryRoute.com or contact Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Cuming at 805-547-2243, info@Highway1DiscoveryRoute.com

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