

travel
itinerary
family

A GRAND CALIFORNIA TOUR FOR LGBTQ+ FAMILIES

A two-week family road trip from **San Francisco to Greater Palm Springs** featuring stops in Oakland, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, West Hollywood, Anaheim, Carlsbad and San Diego.

visit
California

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- Day 1: **San Francisco**
Day 2: **San Francisco**
Day 3: **San Francisco to Oakland**
Day 4: **Oakland to San Jose**
Day 5: **San Jose to San Luis Obispo**
Day 6: **San Luis Obispo to Santa Barbara**
Day 7: **Santa Barbara to Universal City**
Day 8: **Universal City to West Hollywood**
Day 9: **West Hollywood to Santa Monica**
Day 10: **Santa Monica to Anaheim**
Day 11: **Anaheim to Carlsbad**
Day 12: **Carlsbad to San Diego**
Day 13: **San Diego to Greater Palm Springs**
Day 14: **Greater Palm Springs**

CENTRAL TO SOUTHERN COAST

Itinerary overview

Home to more than 2.7 million LGBTQ+ residents, the Golden State has played an essential role in supporting gay rights over the decades and is one of the most queer-friendly states in the nation. June is the biggest month for LGBTQ+ tourism, when hundreds of thousands of people head to cities throughout the state for Pride celebrations. No matter what time of year you are visiting California, there are plentiful opportunities to find LGBTQ+-inclusive events, spaces and

people. Curated for LGBTQ+ families traveling with younger children and teens, this action-packed itinerary travels from north to south, visiting vibrant cities in the Bay Area, charming towns on the Central Coast and iconic Southern California destinations. The fun never stops with this eclectic, exciting line-up of theme parks, beaches, deserts, museums, historic sites and so much more.



● Day 1: San Francisco

- Hop aboard a **Cable Car** to set out for a day exploring San Francisco.
- Peruse the many vendors in the **Ferry Building** marketplace and graze through the excellent eateries.
- Continue along the Embarcadero to the **Exploratorium**, a public learning laboratory exploring the world through science, art and human perception.
- Walk over to **Pier 39** and **Fisherman's Wharf** and treat the family to the **Ghirardelli Chocolate Experience** at **Ghirardelli Square**.
- After resting for a spell in **Crissy Field** and taking in views of the **Golden Gate Bridge**, wander through **The Presidio Tunnel Tops** park and visit the **Walt Disney Family Museum** in the Presidio.
- Have dinner in **Chinatown**—the oldest in North America.
- Overnight in **San Francisco**.

● Day 2: San Francisco

- Start the day in the **Castro District**, the rainbow-adorned center of San Francisco's LGBTQ+ community, known for its role in post-Summer of Love political history supporting the first-ever openly gay politician, Harvey Milk.
- Visit the **Rainbow Honor Walk**, **National GLBT History Museum** (the first stand-alone museum of LGBTQ history and culture in the U.S.) and **Harvey Milk Plaza**. See the rainbow crosswalks at the intersection of 18th and Castro and the mural of Harvey Milk on The Café.
- Pop over to the equally colorful and storied **Haight-Ashbury** neighborhood. Check out the iconic **Painted Ladies**, a stretch of pastel-hued Victorian homes around Alamo Square Park that have been seen in countless films and television shows.



- Head to **Golden Gate Park** to spend the afternoon at the magnificent **California Academy of Sciences**, an aquarium, planetarium, rainforest and natural history museum all in one.
- For dinner, check out the vibrant storied **Mission District** neighborhood known for its amazing Mexican food and murals.
- Overnight in **San Francisco**.

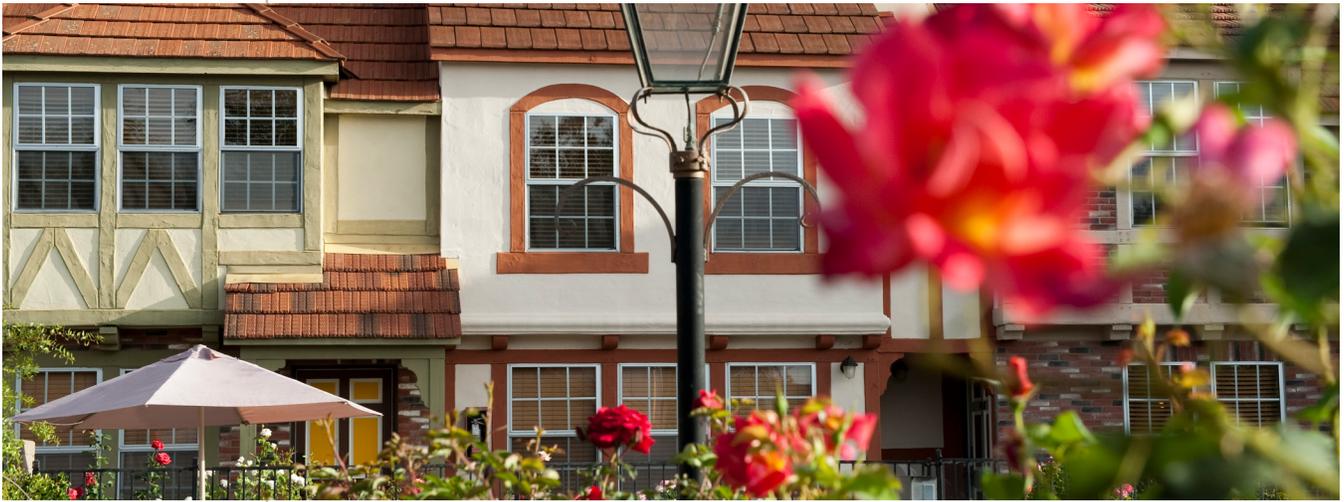
Day 3: San Francisco to Oakland

- Leave “The City” for “The Town,” crossing the Bay Bridge to reach **Oakland** (18 mi/29 km).
- Check out the **Chabot Space & Science Center** where kids can get hands-on with interactive exhibits, look through powerful telescopes and experience the full dome **Planetarium**.
- If you have children eight and under, **Children’s Fairyland** is a must—it’s the theme park that inspired Walt Disney. Older children might prefer the **Oakland Zoo** with its 800+ animals and conservation focus (in which case, go to the Zoo before the Chabot Science Center).
- Rent pedal boats to cruise around **Lake Merritt**, a tidal lagoon that is home to the country’s oldest designated wildlife refuge established in 1870. (Look for the official birds of Oakland, Black Crowned Night Herons, nesting in the trees that line the streets around the lake.)
- Finish the day in the artsy **Temescal** neighborhood and have dinner at kid-approved **Homeroom Mac & Cheese** or **Cholita Linda**.
- Overnight in **Oakland**.



● Day 4: Oakland to San Jose

- Head south to **San Jose** (40 mi/58 km), the heart of Silicon Valley and global hub of tech innovation.
- Find something to satisfy everyone’s palate for dinner at the vibrant **San Pedro Square Market**.
- Explore **The Tech Interactive**, a world class science and technology center in downtown San Jose with hands-on exhibits such as robot building and cyber-sleuthing.
- Tour the 160-room **Winchester Mystery House**, a quirky haunted mansion dating back to 1884.
- Browse around nearby **Westfield Valley Faire** and **Santana Row**—the latter is considered the “Rodeo Drive of Silicon Valley” for its designer stores, luxury electric car showrooms and the only virtual reality dining room in the world.
- Delight your inner sports fan attending a **professional sports game**; San Jose is home to Major League Soccer, National Football League and National Hockey League teams as well as indoor football and minor league baseball.
- Overnight in **San Jose**.



Day 5: San Jose to San Luis Obispo

- Head south on US-101 to the **Central Coast** with **San Luis Obispo** as your destination (184 mi/21 km).
- Good stops to stretch your legs and grab a bite along the way include **Gilroy** (the Garlic Capital of the World), **Salinas** (Steinbeck country) and **Pinnacles National Park** (near Soledad).
- Upon arrival in **Downtown San Luis Obispo**, get your photo ops in **Bubblegum Alley**, visit **Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa** and browse crowd-pleasing shops such as **Tom's Toys**, **Bricks & Mini Figs** and **Rocket Fizz**.
- Have dinner at **The Rock at SLO Brew**, where the kids can play lawn games and parents can enjoy live music and local brews.
- Overnight in **San Luis Obispo**.

Day 6: San Luis Obispo to Santa Barbara

- Beeline to the **Madonna Inn's Copper Café** for breakfast to check out the quirky, colorful hotel.
- Continue south to the **Santa Ynez Valley** via US-101 N (61 mi/98 km). Feed the ostriches and emus at **OstrichLand USA** in **Buellton** and walk around **Solvang**, the Danish Capital of North America—complete with windmills and authentic Danish sweet treats.
- Drive the scenic route on CA-154 E to **Santa Barbara** (33 mi/53 km), passing by **Cachuma Lake**.
- Tour the well-preserved **Mission Santa Barbara**, the 10th of California's 21 missions.
- Stroll **Downtown State Street** and take in the sweeping American Riviera views from the top of the **Santa Barbara County Courthouse** clock tower.



- Take a sunset sail on the **Double Dolphin** and have dinner on **Santa Barbara Harbor**.
- Overnight in **Santa Barbara**.

Day 7: Santa Barbara to Universal City

- Have breakfast at **Jeannine's at the Shore** or **Chad's Café**.
- Rent a surrey to bike along the **Cabrillo Bike Path**, stopping at **Stearns Wharf**.
- Hit the road for **Universal Studios Hollywood** (86 mi/138 km) and revel in attractions such as **SUPER NINTENDO WORLD™**, **The Wizarding World of Harry Potter** and the new **Fast & Furious – Supercharged** ride on the famous Studio Tour.
- In the evening, take advantage of the abundance of dining and family-friendly entertainment options at **Universal's CityWalk**.
- Overnight in **Universal City**.

Day 8: Universal City to West Hollywood

- Start the day with a guided hike to the Hollywood Sign in Griffith Park led by **Hikes & Bikes LA**. If you prefer a horseback sightseeing adventure in the vast park, book a tour with **Sunset Ranch Hollywood** (children must be 8+).
- Take in the sweeping LA city views from the **Griffith Observatory**.
- Visit the **La Brea Tar Pits** and spend the afternoon at The Grove, a family-friendly shopping, dining and entertainment center anchored by **The Original Farmers Market**.
- Wrap up the day in **West Hollywood**, LA's iconic LGBTQ+ neighborhood that is one of the most walkable cities in the country.
- Overnight in **West Hollywood**.



Day 9: West Hollywood to Santa Monica

- After breakfast in West Hollywood, make your way to **Santa Monica** (12 mi/19 km).
- Stop in **Beverly Hills** for photo ops along the famous luxury shopping hub of **Rodeo Drive** and a visit to **The Mr. Brainwash Art Museum**, an interactive all ages art playground featuring the works of street artist Thierry Guetta.
- Once in Santa Monica, **rent bikes** to cruise along the path stretching north to Malibu and south Venice Beach.
- Hit the iconic **Santa Monica Pier** and try all the **Pacific Park** rides, including the iconic Ferris Wheel serving up elevated views of the Los Angeles coastline.
- Overnight in **Santa Monica**.

Day 10: Santa Monica to Anaheim

- Head south to **Anaheim** (42 mi/67 km) for a Disney double-header. Note: GPS will dictate the best route depending on traffic conditions.
- Enjoy “The Happiest Place on Earth,” **Disneyland Resort** and **Disney California Adventure Park**. New attractions joining the classic line-up at Walt Disney’s original Disneyland include **Adventureland Treehouse**, **Mickey & Minnie’s Runaway Railway** and **Star Wars: The Rise of the Resistance**, while California Adventure is known for **Cars Land**, **Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission BREAKOUT!**, the **World of Color** and so much more.
- Overnight in **Anaheim**.



● Day 11: Anaheim to Carlsbad

- Continue south to San Diego County, with **Carlsbad** (65 mi/105 km) as your destination.
- Revel in the creative magic of **LEGOLAND California Resort** and its 60+ rides, shows and attractions including the new **Dino Valley** land.
- Older kids might enjoy some bargain hunting at **The Carlsbad Premium Outlets**.
- Overnight in **Carlsbad**.

● Day 12: Carlsbad to San Diego

- Drive south to **San Diego** proper via I-5 (35 mi/56 km).
- Stop for a bite in San Diego's original LGBTQ+ neighborhood, **Hillcrest**, home to several great breakfast spots such as **Crest Café**, **Bread & Cie** and **Snooze A.M. Eatery**.
- Visit nearby **Balboa Park** to walk through the gardens and explore museums such as the new **Comic-Con Museum** and **Fleet Science Center**. Go into **San Diego Zoo**, where you can see lions, tigers, bears and so much more. Book one of the **special experiences** in advance for exclusive, up-close animal encounters.
- Splash around on **Mission Bay** at one of the beaches or rent a boat or board at the **Mission Bay Aquatic Center**.
- In the evening, enjoy the classic charms of **Belmont Park** in Mission Beach.
- Overnight in **San Diego**.



● Day 13: San Diego to Greater Palm Springs

- Head inland via CA-371 E and CA-74 E (133 mi/214 km) for the last leg of your adventure in the **Greater Palm Springs** desert region.
- Stop at the **Living Desert Zoo and Gardens** in Palm Desert upon entering the Coachella Valley.
- Enjoy your hotel pool and the desert skies after checking into one of the desert's nine resort communities.
- Overnight in **Greater Palm Springs**.

● Day 14: Greater Palm Springs

- Start the day with a **Red Jeep Tour** and hike through the sacred Indian Canyons or opt for the San Andreas Fault tour with or without a hike.
- Board the **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway** (the world's largest rotating tram car) to ride up 8,516 ft/2595 m to **Mt. Jacinto State Park**, where you can take a **nature walk** or simply enjoy the views from the observation deck and dine in one of the restaurants.
- See the larger-than-life **Forever Marilyn** statue and more street art in the **Downtown Palm Springs** neighborhood known as The Block and try a date shake, the desert's signature dessert, at **Great Shakes**.
- Overnight in **Greater Palm Springs**.