

# Postcards of California

## 10 Day Self-Drive Tour

### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Los Angeles • Central Coast • San Francisco • California Wine Country • Yosemite

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Los Angeles

Fly to Los Angeles from the UK and on arrival pick up your hire car. Upon check in; please ask the hotel reception for your ATI Tour documentation pack which will include your tour essentials. The rest of the day is then free to explore a little of more of this most dynamic of cities. Take in the beautiful beaches of Santa Monica, wander the city's famous Walk of Fame, or enjoy something of Los Angeles' numerous world class museums and restaurants. **Accommodation stay – 2 Nights in Los Angeles.**

#### Days 2: Los Angeles

A full day to explore the city or visit one of the many attraction parks. Mickey Mouse and Disneyland are classic favorites, but there is also the movie studio complex at Universal Studios.

#### Day 3: Los Angeles – Pacific Coast Highway - Malibu – Santa Barbara – Central Coast

Start the day with a drive through Santa Monica and the famous beaches of Malibu. Continue up the coast to Santa Barbara, a beautiful seaside community with its famous mission and palm-lined walkways. The harbor and wharf areas are great to explore on foot or rent a bike and see even more. Further north, the classic beach towns of California's Central Coast beg to be explored. Overnight in the heart of California's Central Coast. **Accommodation Stay – 1 Night in Central Coast.** Driving distance 296 kilometres.

#### Day 4: Central Coast – Highway 1 – Monterey/Carmel - San Francisco

Continue north, and near San Luis Obispo join Highway 1 which is renowned as one of the most scenic roadways in the US. Enjoy more stunning views of the rugged coastline and the Pacific with a drive on the 17-Mile Scenic Drive, which passes through the famous Pebble Beach Golf Course. Experience the quaint village of Carmel and the charming seaside town of Monterey. In the late afternoon, arrive in San Francisco. **Accommodation Stay – 2nights in San Francisco.** Driving distance 430 kilometres.

#### Day 5: San Francisco

Use the excellent public transportation or take a guided tour in order to get a taste of some of the highlights such as Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, the Golden Gate Bridge, Union Square and the Civic Center. If the weather is good, take a cruise under the bridges and around Alcatraz or just enjoy sitting at a café and watching the people go by in the Italian district of North Beach.

#### Day 6: San Francisco – Muir Woods - California Wine Country

Cross the Golden Gate Bridge as you head east. Along the way, pass by charming Sausalito with its unique bohemian flavor. Just a short drive further will take you to Muir Woods National Monument. The park is a sanctuary to beautiful redwoods, some reaching as high as 250 ft. Continue east to Napa and Sonoma. These fertile valleys have been attracting tourists and producing the highest quality of wine since the 19th century. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in California Wine Country.** Driving distance 80 kilometers.

#### Day 7: California Wine Country – Gold Country – Yosemite

Start your day early and continue east across California's agricultural Central Valley. Before ascending into the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, join Highway 49 and travel south through California Gold Country following in the footsteps of the thousands of gold seekers during the Gold Rush of 1849. Today this area's streams and creeks are still considered some of the best for gold panning enthusiasts. Continue to Yosemite National Park. **Accommodation Stay – 2nights in Yosemite.** Driving distance 350 kilometers.

#### Day 8: Yosemite

A full day to explore. Yosemite National Park embraces some of the world's most spectacular scenery and affords a wonderful collection of waterfalls, meadows and forests, including groves of giant sequoias. Marvel at the sheer granite domes and cliffs that soar thousands of feet up from the valley floor. The massive glacial-shaped rock formations of El Capitan and Half Dome are the most famous landmarks of the park and keep a majestic watch over the valley.

## Day 9-10: Yosemite – San Francisco – UK

Driving back to San Francisco today, you'll return your hire car and head to the airport for your onward flight home. Driving distance 335 kilometers.

**Board Basis** - This tour is based on a Room only basis

\*Denotes local charge – Optional trips and excursions suggested on the itinerary are bookable and payable locally.

**This is a set tour itinerary, if you have booked any pre/post or optional tour arrangements please refer to your separate vouchers and final documents.**

**All hotels & locations are subject to change based on availability, final hotel list will be confirmed 25 days before departure.**

## TOUR NOTES

For current departure dates and prices please check our website

### Pre/Post Tour information

If you would like to extend your trip or make the tour part of a longer holiday, we can easily add on a pre or post night stays for you. Our Sales Team will work with you to arrange the best connecting flights and book any additional hotel stays. Simply tell us what you'd like and we can arrange it.

### Time difference

Eastern Time Zone: GMT -5 hours

Pacific Time Zone: GMT -8 hours

Mountain Time Zone: GMT -7 hours

Central Time Zone: GMT -6 hours

### Tour inclusions

- Accommodation listed above
- Welcome phone call from American Tours International on Day 1
- Virgin Holidays branded rucksack with tour documentation and Atlas, please ask when you check in at your first hotel for your 'ATI Pack'
- Beach Blanket
- Starbucks gift card.

### Tour exclusions

- All Flights and airport transfers in the UK
- Travel Insurance
- Car hire and insurance unless this has been booked by the sales consultant
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, tips & gratuities, video camera fees at monuments
- The required ESTA application
- Anything not detailed on the itinerary.

### Dining inclusions

Room Only

### Accommodation

Accommodation in the itinerary will be a mix of "V" rated properties based on availability. Please note some tours are up to 3 weeks in duration and there may be some nights when staying in remote locations e.g. the National Parks, when the 'V' rating may vary. Hotels are subject to change up until 30 days prior to departure, but you will be advised of any changes.

### Visa requirements

It's mandatory for everyone travelling to or transferring through the US, under the Visa Waiver Program, to obtain approval to

travel no later than 72 hours prior to travel by completing an online process ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) scheme.

Failure to obtain an ESTA could result in the passenger being denied boarding by the airline. The cost of an ESTA is currently approx \$14 per person and can be obtained by visiting <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Once completed & approved, the ESTA application is valid for two years and allows multiple visits without the need to reapply – simply update your details on the same website. Travelers can apply for an ESTA even if they have no firm plans to travel to the US. If you need any further information on the ESTA or you have any other visa queries, then try the Visit USA Website at [www.visitusa.org.uk](http://www.visitusa.org.uk) where further information on the scheme and up to date fee can also be found. The ESTA is very similar to the automated visa that you purchase to enter Australia and is completely paperless

### Currency

The official unit of currency in the US is the US dollar. Optional excursions will need to be paid locally by cash to the tour guide. Major credit cards and debit cards will be accepted within the US.

### Electricity

If you bring any electrical appliance to the USA, you may need an adaptor to fit the US electrical receptacles. You may also need a converter to change the voltage from 110 volts to 220 volts.

### Tipping

Tipping is a big part of the USA's service economy and their taxation system, all visitors should understand that this is a part of the local culture; please see below a list of useful suggestions for tipping:

- Waiters/Waitresses: 15% - 20% for average - good service, more for exceptional service.
- Bartenders: \$1 - \$2 a round -or- 15% to 20% of the tab, with a minimum of 50 cents per soft drink, \$1 per alcoholic drink.
- Room Service: 15% - 20%
- Taxi driver: Varies depending on locality. Assume 15% will be enough; an extra \$1 to \$2 for help with bags.
- Hotel doorman: \$1 per bag for help with luggage; \$1 per person for hailing a cab.

### Recommended vaccinations

We advise you to discuss your individual requirements for the USA with your GP at least 6-8 weeks prior to travel.