


Best Beaches ALONG HIGHWAY 1

The Central Coast boasts some of the **best beaches in the country**. What sets them apart? Think miles of white sand, uncrowded, untouched, and unbelievably scenic. Visitors can find beaches ideal for beachcombing, wildlife viewing, surfing, tide pooling, doggie fun or even dune-driving. Our "Hidden Gems"  beaches are where you'll find a secluded, quiet space on the sand. The beaches along this stretch of Highway 1 are truly breathtaking. Enjoy!



EXPLORE 101 MILES OF COASTLINE ALONG
THE HIGHWAY 1 DISCOVERY ROUTE.

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BEACHES ALONG HIGHWAY 1

① **Ragged Point:** If jaw-dropping vistas are your goal, then this is the beach for you. The beach is rather exotic with the black sand - a rather common phenomenon on this section of the coast. From the cliffs, views of the beach below are incredible, as are the ever-changing views of the cliffs to the north. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Dog Friendly, Bluff, Path to Beach, Blufftop Trails

② **San Simeon Beach/WR Hearst Memorial State Beach:** Adjacent to the town of Old San Simeon and across Highway 1 from Hearst Castle, this is a local favorite. The calm water and soft sand here are great for children. Other activities include swimming, kayaking, walking the pier and fishing (no license required). Dogs are welcome with areas for both on-leash and off-leash pups. The Coastal Discovery Center, just beside the beach, contains educational exhibits about the shoreline, wildlife, local history and more. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Picnic Area, Fishing, Dog Friendly, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

③ **Moonstone Beach:** One of the best beaches in Central California for beachcombing, with views of nearby cliffs from the boardwalk, Moonstone Beach encourages exploration for visitors of all ages. This beach is known for its smooth "moonstones" as well as sea glass and driftwood. Waves can be large and strong here, so only experienced swimmers and surfers should venture out. Dogs are not allowed on Moonstone Beach. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Picnic Area, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

④ **Estero Bluffs Beach:** Part of a state park, this beach can be reached by hiking through grasslands along bluffs. While several beaches skirt the trail below, the most accessible sits in a sandy cove where Villa Creek meets the sea. Here, find a spot for tidepooling, whale and birdwatching, and beachcombing. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Dog Friendly, Bluff, Path to Beach, Blufftop Trails

⑤ **Cayucos State Beach:** The perfect blend of sand, surf and sun for a classic California vibe. Kids will love the sizeable beach playground, tidepools and fishing off historic Cayucos Pier (no license required!). For surfers, the waves near the pier offer thrills and beginners are welcome. No need to leave your furry family behind as dogs are also permitted here. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Restrooms, Showers, Playground, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Fishing, Dog Friendly, Summer Lifeguards, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

⑥ **Morro Strand:** The 6 miles of white sand beach between Morro Rock and the Cayucos Pier make for a scenic walk. One stretch offers ideal conditions for fishing, windsurfing and kite-flying. It's also a popular training ground for joggers. With excellent facilities for picnicking, this stretch enjoys a picturesque view of Morro Rock in the distance. Dogs are not allowed on this beach. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Picnic Area, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

⑦ **Morro Bay Dog Beach:** Let your four-legged friend play in the surf at this charming off-leash dog beach on Cayucos's southern end. This stretch of coastline has something for the whole family, including beachcombing, wildflowers, tidepools, surfing, fishing and birding. Arrive in the evening to capture photos of Morro Rock at sunset. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Fishing, Dog Friendly, Sandy Beach, Bluff, Path to Beach

⑧ **Montaña De Oro/Spooner's Cove Beach:** If lounging by the ocean is your style, nothing beats the views at Spooner's Cove beach, located within Montaña de Oro State Park. Find a protected cove here, fed by a freshwater stream perfect for wading. Dogs are permitted here on leash, but not on trails or other beaches. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Dog Friendly, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

⑨ **Avila Dog Beach:** Also known as Olde Port Beach, Avila's popular dog beach is where you can take your furry friend for some fun. Off leash dogs can chase down balls or splash in the waves. Humans like this beach as a great spot to hang out with family, launch a kayak or SUP, or have a bonfire complete with s'mores. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Dog Friendly, Sandy Beach, Stairs to Beach

⑩ **Avila Beach:** Spacious beach with soft and gentle waves that's ideal for children. The promenade offers restrooms and outdoor showers, as well as the adjacent Pirate Park with basketball courts and a playground. Additional amenities include picnic tables, grill stands, and parking, along with multiple lodging options. Dogs are prohibited from 10am to 5pm. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Showers, Picnic Area, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Playground, Summer Lifeguards, Sandy Beach, Stairs to Beach

⑪ **Pismo Beach:** A classic California beach, Pismo is a terrific choice for families. The soft sand is perfect for making sand castles and the waves are great for splashing, skimboarding, and surfing. The newly refurbished pier offers a great vantage point overlooking it all. Dogs are welcome on the beach (not pier), but on leash only. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Showers, Picnic Area, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Fishing, Dog Friendly, Summer Lifeguards, Sandy Beach, Stairs to Beach

⑫ **Oceano Dunes & SVRA:** As thrilling as it is beautiful, this state beach permits vehicles to drive on the sand. Other activities here include swimming, surfing, kite-flying and horseback riding. Visitors can also enjoy surf fishing or digging for famous Pismo clams. Dogs are allowed on leash only. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Restrooms, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Fishing, Dog Friendly, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach



COON CREEK BEACH

HIDDEN GEM BEACHES ALONG HIGHWAY 1



San Carpoforo Creek Beach: This hidden gem is at the northern edge of Hearst San Simeon State Park and a portion of the beach is in the Los Padres National Forest. Hikers can follow San Carpoforo Creek to the ocean and locate a spot to cross to reach the waves on this uncrowded spot. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

Pico Creek: This popular surf spot is located at the north end of downtown San Simeon. When the surf's up, you'll find short and longboarders as well as kite surfers at this popular spot. The reef here is located at the mouth of the creek, making for some interesting breaks. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Surfing/Kite Surfing, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

Leffingwell Landing Beach: At the north end of Moonstone Beach lies Leffingwell Landing, offering scenic views of the Pacific and a great spot to enjoy a relaxed picnic with the family. From the overlook you can trek down to the water to explore tidepools or, during the right times of the year, watch for migrating whales. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Picnic Area, Bluff, Path to Beach

Baywood Park Beach: If you're looking for gorgeous sunsets to photograph, the Baywood Park Beach is worth a visit. This quaint spot at the edge of Baywood overlooks the Morro Bay and provides an easy spot to take in the views. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Sandy Beach, Path to Beach

Sand Spit: Located within the picturesque Montaña de Oro State Park, this popular beach is named for the long barrier that protects Morro Bay. A walk here will take you to views of Morro Rock and lead to the Morro Dunes Natural Preserve, which is teeming with wildlife. When conditions are right, you'll often find surfers riding the break here. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Restrooms, Picnic Area, Surfing/Kite Surfing, Sandy Beach, Bluff, Path to Beach, Blufftop Trails

Coon Creek Beach: Coon Creek is the southernmost trail and beach within the popular Montaña de Oro State Park, but the beach itself is only accessible from the Point Buchon Trail on private PG&E land which is only open Thursday through Monday. Plan to go at low tide and you'll be able to explore sea caves and watch water rush in and out of the nearby sinkhole. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Restrooms, Picnic Area, Bluff, Path to Beach, Blufftop Trails

Cave Landing Beach: Adventurous hikers who are seeking a challenge rewarded by views will enjoy Cave Landing Beach. Visible from Smuggler's Cave, this beach seems inaccessible but there is a trail off Pirate's Cove parking lot that includes a fixed rope descent. Dress appropriately—wear shoes with good traction, and are comfortable with a short rapel. [📍 Get Directions](#)

Parking, Bluff, Path to Beach, Blufftop Trails

Oso Flaco Lake & Beach: A hidden gem on the southern edge of the Highway 1 Discovery Route, the Oso Flaco Lake trail takes visitors from an unassuming parking lot among farm fields to amazing dunes landscapes between Oceano and Guadalupe. Bird watchers will delight at the variety of species along the trail and photographers will marvel at the diverse landscapes. [📍 Get Directions](#)

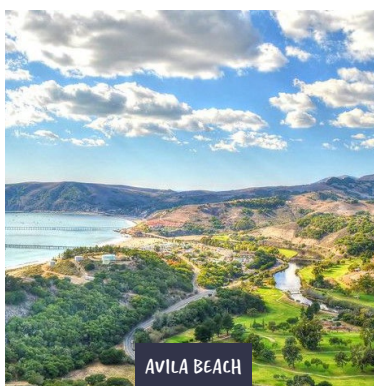
Parking, Restrooms, Sandy Beach, Path to Beach



LEFFINGWELL LANDING BEACH



CAYUCOS STATE BEACH / MORRO STRAND



AVILA BEACH



OCEANO DUNES / PISMO BEACH