

Santa Cruz Tour



VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS

Maps Show You Where... We Show You Why!

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Tour Summary

To simply call Santa Cruz “Surf City,” the municipal nickname, would diminish all the other unique aspects of this funky town. Santa Cruz is indeed a charming seaside village with a century-old beachside amusement park called the Boardwalk, but Santa Cruz also features a large municipal pier, a city harbor, a vast network of bike trails, several state parks and beaches, and an ultra-liberal university situated within a redwood forest! To call Santa Cruz one-of-a-kind would not in any way be considered pretentious or untrue! Santa Cruz is a true gem of Northern California.

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Santa Cruz: Surf City USA





This little seaside town, featured in Beach Boys songs and renowned for great waves, is nicknamed “Surf City.” But even if you don’t surf, there is much to see around town. On this tour we’ll take you to all the best Santa Cruz attractions.



Before the 1989 earthquake, Pacific Street was known as the Pacific Garden Mall. It remains the cultural center of Santa Cruz with several book stores, cafes, and independent movie theaters, as well as live entertainment venues like the Catalyst nightclub.



Santa Cruz is a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly town. There seem to be as many pathways, trails, and lanes for bikes as there are streets for cars. The San Lorenzo River basin is home to many species of birds and spawning fish. Riding the bike trails on either side of the San Lorenzo is a great way to enjoy the river wildlife.



We will start the first chapter of this tour up on Mission Hill where the original Santa Cruz settlement began. Here the Spaniards built the 12th mission, almost all of which

has been lost. The cathedral at the top of the hill is a city landmark.



Santa Cruz is a mecca for classic cars. The mild climate provides little rain, no snow, and lots of sunshine, making it easy to drive around town with the top down. Convertible cars are an icon of Santa Cruz, especially when there is a surfboard poking out the back!



Perhaps the best-known attraction is the world famous Beach Boardwalk, open continuously since 1907. It is California's oldest surviving amusement park and one of only two seaside parks remaining on the West Coast, the other being the Santa Monica Pier.



The most famous ride on the boardwalk is the Giant Dipper rollercoaster. It is the 6th oldest in the U.S., thrilling over 50 million riders since its opening in 1924.



We will also tour the University of Santa Cruz, perched high above the city on a former ranch and tucked within a redwood forest. It is certainly a unique and funky campus!



Out on the wharf, those odd barking sounds are not dogs but sea lions! Several docks are reserved for these engaging mammals, much to the pleasure of the assembled spectators.



We can pick up some seafood in the wharf market, or dine on clam chowder. The Santa Cruz Municipal Pier features several restaurants, gift stores, bait shops, and landings for boat excursions.



For a small town of only some 60,000, Santa Cruz has an abundance of state parks and beaches. In this tour we will visit Lighthouse Field, Natural Bridges, Twin Lakes, and Seabright State Beaches, along with the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park.



Santa Cruz is well-known for a variety of ocean sports including sailing, diving, swimming, and paddling. And let's not forget surfing: several of the best shelf breaks in the world are right here. So, are you ready for a tour of Surf City USA?

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