



Cool Escapes

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Want to escape the valley heat? We suggest six destinations all within three hours' driving distance.



Point Lobos State Reserve, near Monterey

We love summer in Sacramento. The balmy mornings, perfect for a run along the American River bike trail. Sun-soaked afternoons, the solar-heated pool sparkling its invitation. Evenings on the patio, fanned by the Delta, stemmed glass of crisp white wine lightly sweating. But when a heat wave rolls through, bringing blistering days that suffocate under a beige umbrella of smog and nighttime temperatures that don't drop till 4 a.m., it's time for a trip. A trip involving sweatshirts. Here are six journeys into the cool.

MONTEREY

A coastal community famous for its role in California history, its cannery row, its natural beauty and its rich undersea life, Monterey is an easy three hours' drive from Sacramento. It's a stretch for a day trip, but perfect for a weekend.

STAY OVER—Reserve a cottage at Lighthouse Lodge & Cottages, ideally situated in Pacific Grove, a few steps from Point Pinos Lighthouse. For \$225 a night, a luxurious studio cottage includes a king-size bed, whirlpool tub, fireplace, chef-made breakfast, evening wine, television, Wi-Fi, and access to the pool and spa. lighthouselodgescottages.com

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE—Wind your way among the rocks, ice plant and ground squirrels on the Monterey Bay Coastal Trail, which hugs the coastline in Pacific Grove. The section from Lovers Point Park to Asilomar State Beach is especially beautiful, carpeted with wildflowers, leading explorers out to points that showcase the churning sea.

JELLIES GALORE—The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Jellies Experience introduces visitors to jellyfish—elegant, blobby and fascinating. You'll see moon jellies, cross jellies, flower-hat jellies, upside-down jellies, ones that sting and wave and glow and flaunt. Admission is \$34.95 adults, \$21.95 children. montereybayaquarium.com

BENEATH THE SEA—Certified to scuba dive? Monterey's kelp forests and offshore canyon make for some of the best diving in the world. The water's cold (50 to 55 degrees) and often bumpy, and you'll need your wetsuit. Once you descend, the scenery amazes: anemones, bat rays, bluefish, eels, lingcod, halibut, rockfish. You may find yourself swimming with otters and seals as well.

HISTORY LESSON—The first Saturday of the month, historian and author Tim Thomas guides Wharf Walks Walking Tours of Monterey's Fisherman's Wharf, focusing on the area's rich fishing history. The tour is for ages 10 to adult only: \$20 adults, \$15 children 10–15. montereywaterfrontcanneryrowtours.com

FISHWIFE, FISHWIFE—Dive into a Fisherman Bowl at Fishwife restaurant, just up the road from Asilomar. The bowl comes stuffed with black beans, rice, ginger-sesame cabbage, fresh veggies, tortilla strips and the day's "fresh catch"—tilapia, catfish, shrimp, scallops, mahi-mahi—in a variety of spice options. fishwife.com <http://fishwife.com>