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Festive Flukes: Monterey Whalefest

Landlubber-nice activities dot the shore as whale fans eye the waves.

By [Alysia Gray Painter](#)

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Whalefest

Swim for Monterey on Saturday, Jan. 24 and Sunday, Jan. 25 for Whalefest.

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BLOWHOLE OF A BASH: We're not sure what the gray whales and humpback whales have been up to over the holiday season, though they probably have not been wearing those little paper crowns found inside Christmas crackers, because the ocean makes paper crowns rather soggy. And they're probably not kissing anyone under the mistletoe, because it is hard to hang mistletoe under the waves (though, on second thought, maybe a friendly seahorse would hang it over the heads of the kissers). In short? Whales are not engaging in any of the activities we humans love come wintertime around the Golden State, no matter how whimsical the mega

creatures make us feel (and whales are frequent stars of our films and storybooks for a reason). But the migrating whales just might have a special weekend marked on their whale-y calendars, and a special spot, too: Monterey.

THAT WEEKEND... is Saturday, Jan. 24 and Sunday, Jan. 25. It's [Monterey Whalefest](#), the whale-iest time of year at Old Fisherman's Wharf. And, okay, no, whales don't actually have calendars filled with landlubber festivals -- they've got other things to pay attention to, like annual migrations -- but we people can head for the shore, and out on boats, to see if we spy any beautiful blowholes or majestic flukes. The on-land happenings include appearances from whale-minded scientists and experts, a Humboldt squid dissection, a "Whale Disentanglement Team Demo," walking tours, Coast Guard displays, and more.

AND WHALE WATCHING EXCURSIONS, OF COURSE: The Monterey Whalefest is a free to-do, but there are ticketed trips out into the Bay, trips that allow whale mavens to watch for the some "15 species of whales" that visit the area, as well as all of the dolphins, otters, and other ocean-frolicsome life that makes a home, temporary or otherwise, near Monterey. And if you don't see a whale, check out the mega model on shore: A climb-inside 60-foot whale model is a centerpiece of the yearly event, an event that spotlights the educational elements of our humanly whale love, and a few whimsical, magical elements as well. (Nope, whales still don't wear paper crowns, no matter how storybooky the giant creatures make us feel.)

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