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**Santa Barbara Story Ideas**

**SANTA BARBARA BASICS:** Santa Barbara is located 92 miles/148 kilometers north of Los Angeles and 332 miles/534 kilometers south of San Francisco, spanning 100 miles of pristine California coastline.Considered the northernmost point of Southern California and located on the Central Coast, Santa Barbara is known as The American Riviera® thanks to its Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, rich heritage, world-renowned food-and-wine scene, stunning natural beauty and near-perfect weather.

**FUNK ZONE:** Once a manufacturing hub for the fishing industry in the 19th century, a 12-square-block mixed-use area near Santa Barbara’s waterfront, east of State Street, has been affectionately dubbed the “Funk Zone.” Old warehouses and manufacturing plants have given way to a flourishing subculture of artists’ studios and galleries, wine-tasting rooms, craft breweries, artisanal shops and eateries serving some of the city’s most vibrant cuisine. Just steps from the ocean and downtown, these eclectic, locally owned businesses contribute to the bustling Funk Zone community that continues to transform in exciting new ways over time.

**SANTA BARBARA’S WATERFRONT: A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF SALT & SOPHISTICATION:** Santa Barbara’s Waterfront is an eclectic neighborhood where “working” facilities like wineries, surfboard-shaping shacks and fishermen’s boat yards converge with sophisticated attractions, including tasting rooms, museums and world-class restaurants. The area continues to grow with The Hotel Californian, a major resort complex, slated to open in summer 2017; boutique hotels, [**The Wayfarer**](http://www.wayfarersb.com/) (a “posh-tel”) and [**Hotel Indigo**](http://www.hotelindigo.com); more than two dozen wine-tasting rooms; craft breweries; surf shops; art galleries and more. Meanwhile, mainstay attractions include the [**Santa Barbara Maritime Museum**](http://www.sbmm.org), the Saturday Fisherman’s Market, the [**Urban Wine Trail**](http://www.urbanwinetrailsb.com/), SEA Landing, hotels for various budgets and others. Adding to the ease of access, the Santa Barbara Train Station is centrally located here, allowing for a car-free and carefree vacation.

**CAR-FREE TRAVEL:** Unlike most cities in California, you can leave the car at home when you visit Santa Barbara, where the city’s sustainable roots, affordable alternative transportation options and walkable downtown and waterfront areas actually make it easy to get around without a car. For further incentive, visitors can **save 20 percent** on the purchase of a ticket for travel on the Amtrak® Pacific Surfliner® to or from all nine Amtrak stations in Santa Barbara County: Santa Barbara, Goleta, Carpinteria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Surf, Guadalupe and Santa Maria. This award-winning cooperative program created by the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District presents additional car-free alternatives and a guide to experiencing and exploring Santa Barbara car-free. The program also includes perks at more than two dozen participating businesses when you show your Amtrak ticket, such as discounts and special offers. Read more at [**SantaBarbaraCarFree.org**](http://www.santabarbaracarfree.org).

**SANTA BARBARA’S SECRET GARDENS:** Santa Barbara’s beaches are well-known, but the city’s parks and gardens are undiscovered oases hidden in plain sight. Thanks to the late city-planning advocate Pearl Chase, horticulturist Francesco Franceschi, wealthy plant collector and opera singer Ganna Walska and many more flora-and-fauna-loving residents, Santa Barbara’s secret gardens offer visitors a slice of solitude while surrounded by the history and natural beauty of The American Riviera®. Meander through the manicured paths of [**Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens**](http://santabarbaraca.com/businesses/alice-keck-park-memorial-gardens/)**,** or soak in the sunset from the A.C. Postel Memorial Rose Garden (also called the “Mission rose garden,” for its location across from Old Mission Santa Barbara). Tour Ganna Walska [**Lotusland**](http://santabarbaraca.com/businesses/lotusland/), a 37-acre estate in Montecito filled with rare plants and exotic gardens, or peek into Santa Barbara’s past at [**Casa del Herrero**](http://santabarbaraca.com/businesses/casa-del-herrero/), a preserved 1920s villa designed by George Washington Smith and decorated by the same antiquarians used by Hearst Castle. Discover native California at the 65-acre [**Santa Barbara Botanic Garden**](http://www.sbbg.org/), and spot more than 200 species of birds, including duck and geese, at the 32-acre Andrée Clark Bird Refuge across from East Beach.

**EPICUREAN ADVENTURES:** Since the film “Sideways” put Santa Barbara County in the spotlight in 2004, the region has exploded as a hot destination for food and wine lovers who visit to smell, touch and taste their way through the county’s vineyards, farms, farmers’ and fisherman’s markets and restaurants. The following are a few ways to experience the bounty of The American Riviera®:

* Tour **Santa Barbara wine country**, home to more than 220 wineries and one of the fastest-growing viticultural regions in the United States*.* [SBCountyWines.com](http://www.SBCountyWines.com)
* Explore the **Urban Wine Trail**, with more than two dozen wine-tasting rooms in Santa Barbara’s Funk Zone located blocks from the beach and peppered with surf shops, art galleries and eclectic shops, as well as in downtown Santa Barbara. [UrbanWineTrailSB.com](http://www.UrbanWineTrailSB.com)

**AFFORDABLE SANTA BARBARA:** An American Riviera getaway is more affordable than you think! Save money and cash in on fun with inexpensive lodging options, car-free convenience and free activities in Santa Barbara.

* Family-owned inns and unique bed-and-breakfasts are plentiful, even in highly desirable beachside areas, and offer **affordable rates** and **value-added amenities**. [SantaBarbaraCA.com/places-to-stay/](http://santabarbaraca.com/places-to-stay/) OR [santabarbaraca.com/places-to-stay/neighborhood-inns/](http://santabarbaraca.com/places-to-stay/neighborhood-inns/)
* Visitors are encouraged to leave their vehicles at home and experience **car-free Santa Barbara** with the city’s walkable downtown and waterfront areas, abundant bike paths, affordable electric shuttles and pedicabs and award-winning public transportation. Take advantage of “Cool Car Free Discounts,” a collection of offers, including 50-percent off hotel rates, extended to visitors who arrive via car-free transportation. Amtrak passengers can save 20 percent on travel to Santa Barbara with a coupon at [*SantaBarbaraCarFree.org*](http://www.SantaBarbaraCarFree.org)*.*
* **Special Offers** on SantaBarbaraCA.com let visitors stretch their vacation dollars with discounts on activities, dining, transportation and lodging. [SantaBarbaraCA.com/plan-your-trip/special-offers/](http://SantaBarbaraCA.com/plan-your-trip/special-offers/)

**CINEMATIC SANTA BARBARA AND FILM TOURISM:** The original “Hollywood,” Santa Barbara was home to California’s first major movie studio, the American Film Manufacturing Co., aka “Flying A” studios (1910), and in the past century, the region has been cast in classics such as “The Graduate” (1967), “Seabiscuit” (2003), “Sideways” (2004), “There Will Be Blood” (2007), “It’s Complicated” (2009), “20th Century Women” (2016) and more. During the golden era of Hollywood, many celebrities bought homes and hotels in Santa Barbara, including Charlie Chaplin’s Montecito Inn and the San Ysidro Ranch, where Sir Lawrence Olivier married Vivien Leigh and JFK and Jackie O honeymooned. Today, Santa Barbara continues to be a getaway and a place of residence for celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey, Jeff Bridges, Rob Lowe, Ellen Degeneres and Gwyneth Paltrow. Visitors can experience Santa Barbara’s red carpet at the **Santa Barbara International Film Festival** each January or February, when Oscar contenders and the industry's best will gather for 10 days of screenings, tribute events, panel discussions and parties. On SantaBarbaraCA.com, visitors can download [**The “Sideways” Map**](http://santabarbaraca.com/itinerary/sideways-santa-barbara/) to plan a personalized film and wine tour of Santa Barbara.

**FAMILY TRAVEL:** Santa Barbara’s manageable size, easy-going pace and friendly locals create a relaxing yet engaging family-travel experience for all ages — no lines, no expensive admissions, no hassles.   
[SantaBarbaraCA.com/itinerary/family-approved-activities/](http://santabarbaraca.com/itinerary/family-approved-activities/)

* Endless **outdoor adventures** can be had on hike-friendly mountains, nature preserves, recreational lakes, skateboard parks, beaches and bike paths.
* 20+ interactive **museums** and **kid-centric cultural attractions** engage minds and stoke imaginations. In addition to the popular Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center, Santa Barbara Zoo, Museum of Natural History and Maritime Museum, special interests can be cultivated at the Carriage and Western Arts Museum, South Coast Railroad Museum and Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum. MOXI, the Wolf Museum of Exploration + Innovation, dedicated to science and technology, will open in early 2016.

**ROMANCE ON THE AMERICAN RIVIERA®:**

Santa Barbara’s lure as a romantic haunt is well documented, from Clark Gable’s wedding to the honeymoon of JFK and Jackie O. Add to the mix the region’s unique lineup of wedding venues — from ranches to mansions and top-rated bed-and-breakfast inns — and visitors can set the scene along The American Riviera®. Santa Barbara exudes romance; just ask the 3,000+ couples who wed here annually or the plethora of honeymooners who follow in John and Jackie Kennedy’s footsteps.

**SANTA BARBARA’S ARTS & CULTURE SCENE:** Few cities of Santa Barbara’s size can match the quality and diversity of its artistic and cultural offerings, which include some 50 museums and galleries and a wide range of performance venues hosting world-class theater groups, opera and dance companies, chamber orchestras, a symphony orchestra and more. [SantaBarbaraCA.com/plan-your-trip/arts-and-culture/](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/plan-your-trip/arts-and-culture/)

* Artists and musicians from around the world make frequent stops in Santa Barbara as it’s the biggest cultural hub between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The legendary **Santa Barbara Bowl**, a natural amphitheatre nestled against the Riviera neighborhood, offers a stellar lineup of concerts. [SBBowl.org](https://sbbowl.com/)
* With a thriving **literary scene**, Santa Barbara is home to authors T.C. Boyle, Pico Iyer, Sue Grafton and more.
* Besides annual arts events and festivals, Santa Barbara offers time-tested standbys: monthly **1st Thursdays**, when galleries extend their hours and downtown streets become outdoor stages, and Sundays year-round, when Cabrillo Boulevard transforms into a seaside celebration oflocal arts and crafts **during the Santa Barbara Arts & Crafts Show**.
* **Architecturally stunning theaters** constructed in the 1920s and ’30s, including the Granada Theatre, Arlington Theatre and Lobero Theatre, provide stunning backdrops for myriad live entertainment.
* Santa Barbara’s film heritage fuels its modern cinema scene, and the annual **Santa Barbara International Film Festival** attracts Oscar contenders and film industry insiders.[SBIFF.org](http://www.SBIFF.org)

**OUTDOOR ADVENTURE:** TheSanta Barbara South Coast’s diverse terrain and year-round temperate weather affords a multitude of activities — mountainside, seaside and aerial. [SantaBarbaraCA.com/plan-your-trip/outdoor-recreation/](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/plan-your-trip/outdoor-recreation/)

* **Kayak** and **SCUBA dive** along the shores and through sea caves at **Channel Islands National Park & Marine Sanctuary**,known as the “Galapagos of North America” and located 25 miles offshore.
* **Mountain bike** down rocky trails in the rugged, easy-to-access Santa Ynez Mountains and **road bike** up traffic-free grades like Gibraltar Road frequented by Tour de France and AMGEN Tour of California cyclists, North America’s premier cycling competition.
* **Hang-glide** off beachside bluffs and **hike** around miles of wooded and ocean-view trails.
* **Sail**, **whale-watch** and **stand-up paddle board** along Santa Barbara’s stunning coastline.
* Embark on an inward-bound journey with **yoga, Pilates** and **holistic wellness programs** in Santa Barbara.
* **Catch a wave** at one of Santa Barbara’s surf breaks and experience this town’s well-established surf culture with many famous surfers and brands calling Santa Barbara home. Living legends Bruce Brown and Renny Yater helped put SB on the map, and Sex Wax was invented here. Surfing history is preserved at the **Santa Barbara Maritime Museum’s** *Surf’s Up!* permanent exhibit. <http://www.sbmm.org/>
* From May to October, don’t miss all the excitement of a polo match featuring world-class players; games are open to spectators at the **Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club**.

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