



To get to the Big Sur you'll travel over the Bixby Bridge – one of the tallest single span concrete bridges in the world and one of the most photographed bridges on the West Coast. It's 714 feet long and 280 feet high.

There are many beautiful sights along the Big Sur – Pfeiffer Beach, McWay Falls, Point Sur State Historic Park, Ragged Point – it'll be hard to get any driving done with all the lookout points. If you have time, take a few days to relax along the route, soak up some of the scenery and just generally chill the hell out.

The Big Sur is like a rural mountain community with an arty, hippy focus. If you have time the natural hot spring baths at the Esalen Institute are just something else. They're well known for their healing qualities for both body and mind in the au naturel pools over the stormy surf below.

6. San Simeon



When you hit San Simeon it's time for a rest from driving. Make your way up to Hearst Castle on The Enchanted Hill and you can travel back in time as you make your way through more than 250,000 acres of rooms, suites, cottages, kitchens and grounds. More than 1 million people visit every year and it's the number one attraction in San Simeon.

Moonstone Beach is also very popular here, as is the Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery and shopping at Cambria Village too.

7. San Luis Obispo



Now, if you really want to make your mark on the world you need to hit up Bubblegum Alley in San Luis Obispo. You'll find a 15-foot high, 70-foot long alley lined with the sticky stuff from passersby. Absolutely disgusting but tourists love it and you can add yours to the collection.

If you've got time to spare in San Luis Obispo hike up Black Hill, Islay Hill, Bishop Peak and round the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. The Fremont Theatre is also worth a visit, if only for the awesome facade in the evening. Soda Lake is an awesome sight too, especially for anyone with an eye for design.

Nearby Pismo Beach is a lovely little stop off – tasty restaurants, ATV rentals, wine tasting, fishing, surfing, skydiving, bowling and mineral springs all waiting for you. Some people know it as the 'Clam Capital of the World', others know it simply as Pismo Beach, either way this classic California beach town makes for a fun stop.

8. Santa Barbara



If you want another stop before hitting the bright lights of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara makes for a nice break. Again keep to the coast line along the Pacific Coast Highway and you'll see Stearns Wharf and East Beach. Animal and flora lovers will enjoy Santa Barbara Zoo, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and Lotusland too. Culture vultures can hone in on the Lobero Theatre, the Arlington Theatre and the Santa Barbara Historical Museum.

Make sure to get in the right lane to make the most of the views from the Pacific Coast Highway before you arrive in Ventura.

9. Ventura



You'll pass through the town of Oxnard – carry on and you'll end up right on Ventura Beach in front of the pier. *This* is the spot if you want to do some surfing. If not, take a look around the historic Downtown Ventura and make the most of the vintage boutiques and second hand stores.

10. Malibu



Malibu is only 15 miles of incredible state beaches and the open road from Ventura. Follow the signs to Point Dume and you'll find a beautiful sandy beach, headlands, cliffs and rocky coves. Take a walk around Malibu and you'll find piers, sickeningly beautiful weekend homes and super healthy restaurants.

Exit Malibu via the stunning Topanga Canyon – a popular weekend hideaway for Hollywood superstars for years. Stay on Route 27 and you'll come across offbeat stores, diners and ramshackle saloons along the roadside. Get out at the top for an awesome view over the San Fernando Valley at the top of Topanga Overlook.

11. Los Angeles



Visit the Kodak Theatre, walk along the Hollywood Walk of Fame, check out the Santa Monica Pier, drive down Sunset Boulevard and stroll down Rodeo Drive. You could check out the awesome views of the Hollywood sign from Griffith Observatory, visit Universal Studios or go on a stars homes tour.

12. Long Beach



If you fancy a little detour from the main route take a trip to Long Beach. Make sure to check out the Long Beach Museum of Art housed in an early 20th Century mansion for your daily dose of culture.

You'll drive along Dana Point, Laguna Beach, Newport Beach and Huntington Beach before entering San Diego County. The coast around the Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve is kind of crazy, thrill seekers will love it.

Here you'll get to drive over the 2-mile-long Coronado Bridge as it snakes its way across San Diego Bay. You'll also drive along Mission Beach, Pacific Beach and La Jolla. Carry on and you'll see more than a few beautiful lagoons coming from the ocean.

13. San Diego



Once you're in San Diego, Balboa Park, Downtown and Old Town are great for snap happy backpackers. Make your way up to the Cabrillo National Monument at the tip of Point Loma and you'll get an incredible view of San Diego and the Bay. The perfect way to end your trip.

Take an Epic US Road Trip