

San Jose Secrets: Surprises in and Around Town

SAN JOSE, CA — You don't really know San Jose until you explore some of its unforgettable attractions, from its earliest adobes to a mysterious mansion and innovative museums. Nearby small towns make for rewarding daytrips, from Campbell and Mountain View to Los Gatos and Saratoga. And San Jose is a gateway to some of the most amazing sights in California, from uncrowded wine country to some of the most beautiful beaches in the world (like Santa Cruz). Spend a day or a week and you'll begin to unlock its secrets.

Around Town: From Adobes to Innovation

Originally called **El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe**, San Jose was founded on November 29, 1777 and became Spain's first civil settlement in Alta California. Surprised? Even more astonishing is that you can see the last remaining structure from El Pueblo right downtown. Built in 1797, the **Peralta Adobe** is a humble yet handsome remnant of the Pueblo days; make an appointment for a tour and you can see the adobe's two rooms furnished as they might have been when they were occupied by the Gonzales and Peralta families. Nearby, the dainty **Fallon House** (www.historysanjose.org) is a Victorian mansion, built in 1855 by one of San Jose's earliest mayors; the tour (call to book) showcases 15 fully furnished rooms typical of the Victorian period. Across town, another compelling bit of history is the 160-room California Landmark **Winchester Mystery House** (www.winchestermysteryhouse.com), circa 1880s, is a must-see attraction, with its staircases to nowhere and other architectural oddities. Created by the Winchester Rifle heiress, Sara Winchester, the mansion's oddities arose from her carefree style of designing (often on tablecloths), eschewing architectural blueprints.

Only California has a chain of 21 lovely and historic missions, and an easy side trip to neighboring Santa Clara is where you'll find **Mission Santa Clara de Asis** (www.scu.edu/mission) on the campus of the Santa Clara University, a private Jesuit university. Visitors enjoy the mission's towering architecture, its rose garden, and its aura of serenity. While you're on campus, stroll over to the University's repository of art and history, the **de Saisset Museum** (www.scu.edu/desaisset). The free museum is small, but amazingly diverse (including prints by artists ranging from Albrecht Durer to Pablo Picasso). Back in San Jose's Rose Garden neighborhood, the **Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum** (www.egyptianmuseum.org) houses a replica of an Egyptian temple and a newly restored planetarium; by spring, a spectacular new landscaping scheme will evoke the feeling of an ancient Egyptian garden.

The modern is celebrated in San Jose, too, at the **Tech Museum of Innovation** (www.thetech.org). Its themed galleries explore the kinds of topics—innovation, the Internet, the human body, and exploration—so in tune with Silicon Valley. And it boasts Northern California's only domed IMAX screen—the ultimate immersive movie experience. If you need an even bigger thrill, head for **Great America** (www.cagreatamerica.com) with amusement park rides and a water park, or hold the rides and just get wet at 23-acre **Raging Waters San Jose** (www.rwsplash.com), Northern California's largest water park. When you're ready to really bust out, San Jose has open space aplenty, from the city's urban gem, **Kelley Park**, to mountainous **Henry W. Coe State Park** (www.coepark.org), some 87,000 acres of trails, lakes, and wilderness just east of town.

A Taste of Wine Country

Who knew San Jose was such a great hub for wine country touring? You can start your research right downtown, where a host of sophisticated wine bars now offer tastings and food pairings; when you're ready to go to the source, you'll find an array of laid-back, unpretentious wineries within a forty-minute drive of town.

First, the tasting room at **The San Jose Wine Center for J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines** (www.jlohr.com) is so welcoming, there's no tasting fee and no appointment needed. Nearby, the recently-opened **A Perfect Finish** (www.apfwinebar.com) has a state-of-the-art wine tasting and serving system—plus special Thursdays tastings and music on Friday and Saturday nights. Also new, the **San Pedro Square Bistro & Wine Bar** has a wide selection and a charming patio. A short cab ride away, Santana Row's **Vintage Wine Merchants** (www.vintagewinemerchants.com) has weekly tastings and pours over 25 wines by the glass; **Cielo at Hotel Valencia** (www.hotelvalencia.com) offers tastings in a spectacular rooftop setting; and **Village California Bistro and Wine Bar** (www.thevillagebistro.net) serves flights, half-bottles, and bottles.

But since California's wine country is so hauntingly lovely—and such an easy drive from San Jose—you should make time for a daytrip. Put the top down, pack a picnic, and hit the backroads to rolling vineyards, friendly tasting rooms, and some charming small towns.

The drive up steep Hecker Pass Highway (State 152) rewards you with awesome views east over the sweeping Santa Clara Valley and west to glittering, blue Monterey Bay. But the payoff begins long before the highway reaches Mt. Madonna and its 1,309-foot peak. You'll find a secret cache of vineyards called the **Hecker Pass Wineries** (www.gilroyvisitor.org/wineries/dir.php); cozy, mostly family-run outfits like Fontino Winery, Hecker Pass Winery, Kirigin Cellars, Sarah's Vineyard, and Solis Winery.

To the west, the Santa Cruz area has produced wine since the late 1800s but only reached its full flowering in recent years. Now, you can taste your way through dozens of small, family-owned wineries in the Santa Cruz Mountains; get a map from the **Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association** (www.scmwa.com). Guided wine tours are available, such as the Santa Cruz Experience (www.thesantacruzexperience.com).

Sidetrips: Small Towns and Coastal Sojourns

From downtown San Jose, it's a quick ride on Caltrain to **Mountain View** (www.mountainviewdowntown.com) where you can stroll its bustling downtown filled with bookstores, coffeehouses, and sidewalk cafes. Castro Street is the town's main drag for dining, and you can nosh your way around the world here, with cuisines from Chinese and Thai to Mediterranean. The atmosphere is always lively, thanks to a roster of fun events like the Farmer's Market, the Arts and Wine Festival, and a summer concert series.

Downtown **Campbell** (www.downtowncampbell.com) is a vibrant shopping and entertainment district. Centered on Campbell Avenue between Bascom and Winchester, it's modern but retains evidence of its rich agricultural past, from historic buildings to a terrific Sunday Farmer's Market and fabulous Oktoberfest. For Campbell's Third Friday Art Walks, ten art galleries and studios stay open late (from 6pm to 9pm) for browsing and activities like meet-the-artist sessions.

Just west of downtown, at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains foothills, **Los Gatos** (www.town.los-gatos.ca.us) is loaded with small town charm. Shoppers love the village for its stylish mix of stores—everything from unique boutiques to high-end national retailers. Walkable, tree-shaded streets, handsome historic buildings, and plenty of small cafes and coffeehouses (where you can rest between buying sprees) are some of the qualities visitors love about Los Gatos. At the edge of the redwoods, **Saratoga** (www.saratogachamber.org) is also known for its distinctive salons and spas, interior design studios, and unique specialty shops. Both towns are off Highway 17 via the Saratoga-Los Gatos Road.

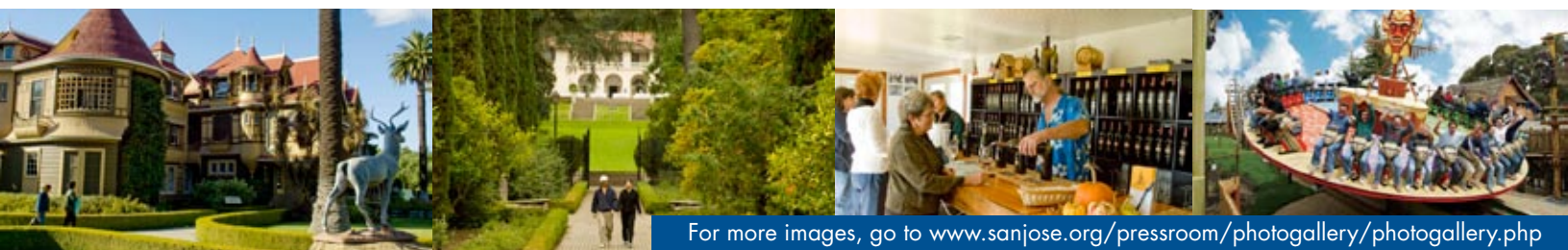
Ready to get a little sand between your toes? Then head for **Santa Cruz**, just a short drive down Highway 17. Choose from any of some 29 miles of beaches, including the long, white beach fronting its classic **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** (www.beachboardwalk.com) — always fun for families—and Cowell's Beach, great for catching waves or just watching the surfers.

Or continue down Highway 1 a bit further to the **Monterey Coast**, with its famous sights: Cannery Row, Carmel and Big Sur, the legendary links of Pebble Beach. A daytrip to Monterey can be filled with bayside biking, ocean kayaking, golfing on the world's most spectacular courses, or just watching the sea otters cavort at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Whether you're a visitor to San Jose or a resident, take time to explore some of the city's amazing attractions and easy daytrip destinations. You'll discover a whole new side to the city, and more than a few of San Jose's secrets.

About The San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB)

The San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB) mission is to enhance the image and economic well being of San Jose by marketing San Jose as a globally recognized destination. The SJCVB offers visitors, meeting planners, and tour operators, a range of services to ensure a successful event and fun visit to San Jose. For a copy of the Official Visitors Guide, please contact the SJCVB at 1.800.SAN.JOSE (1.800.726.5673) or visit <http://www.sanjose.org>.



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