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15 stunning Airbnbs along California's coast, from beachfront condos to redwood cabin retreats

Rene Engelhorn 1 hour ago

Airbnb

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- **If you're planning a trip to California, you're likely envisioning a coastal beach getaway.**
- **Much of the California coast is rugged or residential, for ample lodging choices, look to Airbnb.**
- **From Santa Barbaraness to steak condos, top-rated coastal Airbnbs start from $101 to $242 per night.**

From the sunny bylcs of the Beach Boys to the moody seacapes of "Big Little Lies," California's beaches and coasts have long been mythologized in American pop culture.

But that dreamy weather and scenery often come at a premium, with hotels and resorts near the water commanding a hefty price. Thankfully, there are affordable Airbnbs that not only save money but offer added space, privacy, and the chance to live like a California local.

As a writer who's lived in Los Angeles most of my life, I know my state well and have traveled it widely — especially its coastline. I only occasionally get excited over a celebrity sighting; spotting a dolphin from my beach chair is where my bliss truly lies. Over the years, I've explored the rugged heights of Big Sur, the craggy, foggy landscape of Lambda, and the wide sandy shores of San Diego, and know there's nothing like exploring these areas from the base of a beach house.

Understanding how varied California's coastline can be, I combed Airbnb for geographically diverse listings that showcase how truly stunning my state's shores can be.

We selected top Airbnbs in California based on the following criteria:

1. Listings are for the entire home to avoid interaction with owners or others, in line with recommended COVID-19 precautions.
2. All homes are connected to Airbnb's Enhanced Clean program, a five-step cleaning process developed in partnership with health and hospitality experts.
3. All listings are highly rated with a 4.7 rating or higher and excellent recent guest reviews.
4. Airbnb homes are all either on the beach or within a 10-minute walk or less from it and offer ocean views.
5. Airbnbs boast beachy amenities such as entry patios, water views, barbecues, hot tubs, hanging hammocks, fire pits, or outdoor showers.
6. Homes are affordably typically starting between $101 and $242 per night, with the higher end representing luxury or exceptional spaces, and the lower end being where a beachfront condo for $242 is, frankly, a steal. However, expect rates to be higher during popular seasons, holidays, and some weekends.
7. Homes are available to book in the coming weeks and have at least a few weekends or midweek availability. For most Airbnbs in California, click here.

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Here are the best Airbnbs on the California Coast, sorted by price from low to high.

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Boho Airstream trailer in the sand dunes of Humboldt County

Airbnb

Book this Airstream on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $101
Town: Arcata
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.95

Live like an influencer for a few nights in this Instagram-ready restored 1952 Airstream trailer. Permanently parked next to the hosts' home, the trailer sits adjacent to sand dunes that lead down to the beach.

The accommodations are small but charming, with a modern boho vibe. Light walls and wood furniture are accented by Mexican blankets and hanging quilts. A wood deck extends the living space and features a patio with chairs and decorative succulents. The screened outdoor shower and clawfoot tub are especially nice touches, completing the whole luxe-minimal vibe.

Beachs here are known for good surf as well as their proximity to Redwood National and State Parks. A stipend to see the majestic trees is a must for any visitor, and hiking and cycling opportunities abound, as well.

Serene studio near Ocean Beach in San Francisco

Airbnb

Book this San Francisco studio on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $143
Town: San Francisco
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.87

Situated in the Outer Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco, this studio apartment is located just blocks from Ocean Beach and Golden Gate Park, allowing you the option to beach it one day, and see the city the next.

The space occupies the lower level of a duplex and has its own private entrance. It's been newly renovated with clean lines and a friendly color palette of neutrals, blue grays, and neutral yellow. There's a full kitchen and a sweet little backyard patio with a succulent garden, where the owner's dog may greet you. A number of reviewers appreciated the neighborhood's breakfast spots, while noise-sensitive travelers should be aware that upstairs noise could be an issue.

Modern vintage coastal bungalow in LA's South Bay

Airbnb

Book this Redondo Beach bungalow on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $153
Town: Redondo Beach
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.73

Well situated in South Redondo, this 1927 historic coastal bungalow has been updated with modern amenities including a new Queen bed, a full kitchen, and a fenced-in outdoor patio. Its vintage-style wooden film traditional wall moldings and plate rails.

The blue and white coastal color scheme is playful but relaxing, and special touches like a claw-foot soaking tub are particularly inviting. Guests can also take the sea air from the front yard, which is nicely landscaped with trees and plants and a small table and chairs.

The property is two blocks from the beach and Redondo Beach Pier, with restaurants and bars, water activities and rentals, fishing, harbor cruises, and whale watching excursions.

Beachfront guest suite in Cambria

Airbnb

Book this Cambria suite on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $159
Town: Cambria
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.76

Cambria's rugged windswept coastline exudes romance, and this guest suite places you in easy reach of it. With a private entrance just across the highway from the essential Moonstone Beach, these accommodations have a lot going for them in terms of amenities and location. It appears to be part of a bungalow-style hotel complex.

Appointed in nautical style, the room has a King-size bed, a small wood table with two chairs, and a full bathroom. There's a TV, Wi-Fi, a mini fridge, and a Keurig coffee maker in the room. Step outside, and you have that stunning view of the ocean through the Monterey pines.

Town center is just a couple of miles south, and although it's currently closed out of publication, Hearst Castle, the famed mansion of eccentric newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, is just seven miles to the north.

Spanish-revival guesthouse near Santa Barbara

Airbnb

Book this Montecito guesthouse on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $192
Town: Montecito
Sleeps: 2 guests/studio
Rating: 4.93

Just east of Santa Barbara, the sleepy, rich beach enclave of Montecito is home to celebrities such as Oprah, Ellen, and Harry and Meghan.

So, to find this little guesthouse — oozing with local Spanish-Revival charm and an affordable price — really feels like a win.

The studio features vaulted wood ceilings with skylights, white plaster walls, and natural white and wood rustic furniture accented with Mexican textiles. The kitchen is small but well-equipped, with a basic kitchenette and a small bathroom. French doors lead to a picturesque patio with a lush container garden, a wood-burning fireplace, a tiled fountain, and cafés and chairs. There's also an additional upstairs terrace, as well as a lovely little private outdoor shower. Guests have that the outdoor shower is the only shower. Though, I'm not sure who would choose an indoor one after being given this luxurious option.

In general, what the place lacks in some amenities, it makes up for in others: beach rentals, Google boards, a long-stay board, and a kayak. The prime location is also so easy walk to restaurants and Butterfly beach, a favorite among Santa Barbara locals, as well as a short drive to wineries.

Laid-back suite with a hot tub and pizza oven in Santa Cruz

Airbnb

Book this Santa Cruz suite on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $221
Town: Santa Cruz
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.80

Two blocks from the surf and a short drive from the iconic boardwalk, this little-to-late suite has related Santa Cruz vibe, including a pretty little patio that's trimmed out with a hot tub, hammock, fire pit, and even a pizza oven. In case that wasn't enough, the amenities continue with surfboards and electric bikes that are available for use, plus great passes to the Monterey Bay Aquarium (if it should re-open).

As for the basics, reviewers appreciated the studio's cleanliness, and noted the bed is quite cozy. Several visitors appreciated the thorough guest manual the hosts provided, and the jacuzzi got high marks, as did the overall location.

Santa Cruz's idyllic beaches, laid back NoCal vibe, and proximity to destinations like Monterey and San Francisco make this spot the perfect place to unwind or explore as you wish.

Modern cedar cottage with views of Tomales Bay

Airbnb

Book this Inverness cottage on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $202
Town: Inverness
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.96

Airbnb

Book this Half Moon Bay cottage on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $135
Town: Half Moon Bay
Sleeps: 4 guests/2 bedrooms
Rating: 5.0

This seven beach cottage in El Granada sits across the street from Princeton Harbor in Half Moon Bay, enjoying sunset views, ocean breezes, and proximity to the beach, grocer shops, and fresh seafood from the wharf and nearby restaurants.

Inside, the feel is homey and comfortable, with mostly clean-lined furniture accented by bohemian touches like Mexican blankets and Indian tapestries. The kitchen is equipped with all the pots and pans for cooking options you prefer for comfort food at home, and the house is well stocked for kids with board games and a record player.

The outdoor shower is a must after a day at the beach, perhaps followed by a relaxing sit on the covered porch to watch the sunset. Turn on the fireplace in the evening and keep an eye out for dolphins or seal rolls in.

Cabin with views of Redwoods and the ocean in Mendocino County

Airbnb

Book this Gualala cabin on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $236
Town: Gualala
Sleeps: 4 guests/2 bedrooms
Rating: 4.95

You must have to choose between mountains or ocean views at this special property, set among giant redwoods and overlooking the Pacific in Northern California's Mendocino County.

The views are breathtaking, and the home itself is lovely with vaulted wood beams, picture windows, and natural light pouring in through many skylights. The decor adds personality too, with fringed rugs and patterned pillow alongside a tufted area and sectional sofas.

With a fireplace, sizing lights, and a hammock on the patio, plus board games and a football table, the house is well suited for a family or group of friends to enjoy together, but could also serve as a couple's retreat.

Natural wonders abound in this region, and it's a short drive to beaches and hiking trails, or about 15 minutes one to see the Point Arena Lighthouse.

Historic cottage on the Venice canals

Airbnb

Book this Venice cottage on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $254
Town: Venice
Sleeps: 2 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.92

Los Angeles's coastal town of Venice is well known, but fewer are familiar with the quaint residential neighborhood within Venice known as the Venice Canals Historic District. Built along a series of canals, it's responsible for inspiring the city's name. The picturesque community features upscale and meticulously maintained homes surrounded by lush gardens, and it's a great place to walk, bike and gawk, but some visitors don't get to come inside, and anyone interested in peddling the canal has to bring their own boat.

However, this special Airbnb that lies you cry our living like a local. Inside, it's a cozy, one-bedroom, one-bathroom cottage that includes a kitchen, a living area and TV, as well as cross-like a priced tub in the bathroom and a barbecue. But the more fun is visitors' access to the home's private dock and boats, including a canoe, rowboats, and kayaks. All that, and you're also seen blocks from the Pacific and all the shopping, food, culture, and attractions that Venice has to spoken.

Airy midcentury beach bungalow in Orange County

Airbnb

Book this Newport bungalow on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $275
Town: Newport Beach
Sleeps: 4 guests/2 bedrooms
Rating: 4.87

The O.C. beaches are legendary, and Newport's shoreline definitely falls into that category. For a getaway in the center of things, this bungalow offers a convenient location and newly remodeled accommodations, including a kitchen with Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances, and furnishings in grays, whites, and wards on the backdrop for a Saatinen-style dining table and plastic tub chairs, as well as colorful wall art that evokes the beach.

In fact, the home is just a block from the sand, and also provides bikes, boogie boards, and water toys for a full day at the beach.

The pies, bars, and restaurants are also a short walk or bike ride away, or take advantage of the barbecue and full kitchen and enjoy the comforts of home.

Historic home Across the San Francisco Bay

Airbnb

Book this San Francisco home on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $299
Town: Alameda
Sleeps: 6 guests/3 bedrooms
Rating: 4.90

This Alameda historic home across the bay from San Francisco is a great option for families or couples. Besides having room for eight and an spacious/baby-prep top, it's within steps of the beach and is also a ferry ride from downtown San Francisco. Alameda itself is also a charming place to explore on its own.

The home offers bay views, breezes, and modern decor. Its well-appointed flat and precious, which means you won't have to worry too much about kids running around being kids. Ahead, a number of the sofas look to be upholstered in sturdy fabrics or leather, and the wood furnishings look well-made and last a little well-worn, so no one would notice a new scuff here or there.)

The backyard is fenced, with citrus trees, a barbecue, and a patio table and chairs. Also provided are beach supplies including towels, an umbrella, and chairs.

Modern Spanish duplex in San Diego

Airbnb

Book this San Diego home on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $350
Town: Point Loma
Sleeps: 6 guests/ 2 bedrooms
Rating: 4.95

This San Diego property has a very appealing price point for its location, amenities, and ability to accommodate as many as six guests. It's located in the La Playa neighborhood of Point Loma, which is a quiet community on the bay, close to the waterfront and San Diego Yacht Club. It does seem to have some quirks, such as one bedroom being accessed through the other bedroom (you get to the kitchen, which is quite small, from the front door.

But a lot can be forgiven for that deck top hot tub and view of the city skyline. The space also looks light, bright, and modern.

Rustic ocean view guesthouse in Carmel

Airbnb

Book this Carmel guesthouse on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $214
Town: Carmel by the sea
Sleeps: 4 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 4.85

South of Monterey as you travel Highway 1, Carmel by the Sea is known for its mix of rugged coastline and accessible beaches, storybook cottages, and many art galleries. This French chateau-style guesthouse in the nearby Carmel Highlands offers well-appointed and serene resting place from which to discover it all, and stunning vistas as well.

The listing describes a guesthouse set apart from the main house on 1.5 lush acres, giving lodgers plenty of privacy. Though, in reading through the reviews, it was also noted that this guesthouse is actually built over the owner's garage.

The balcony and its views are the real stars, overlooking the Carmel landscape and oceans beyond. Inside, vaulted, wood beamed ceilings and large windows bring the view inside and help give the already good-sized 700+ square feet place a larger feel. The kitchen has a sink and cooktop but no oven, and only a mini fridge. The listing states it's only meant for light cooking.

The rest of the home appears quite comfortable, with a King and Queen bed of differing bonuses and a large sofa and dining table. Hers an Big Sur's Bixby Bridge are a 20-minute drive.

Contemporary beachfront condo in Malibu

Airbnb

Book this Malibu condo on Airbnb

Typical starting price: $645
Town: Malibu
Sleeps: 4 guests/1 bedroom
Rating: 5.0

This slice of heaven has a four-night minimum, but if you can swing it, it's a rare opportunity to get a taste of how celebs live as a fraction of what a Malibu beach home would typically cost.

The space is small, at 350 square feet, but floor-to-ceiling glass slides that open to the ocean make it look spacious, and the vibe is tranquil, warm, and contemporary. A brick accent wall and bench decor comprised of whites and accents with touches of blues and greens give the home a designer feel but and the condo is maintained by the one of a full-time snoopby bed in the living room in addition to a King size bed in the small bedroom. The kitchen has a microwave, cooktop, and full fridge.

Access to the beach is, of course, top of mind, and is just down a private outdoor staircase. The building sits on stilts, allowing the waves to roll right under it during high tide, but when the tide is low, there's a perfect sandy beach to lazz or frolic on.

FAQ: Visiting the California Coast

Where should I get an Airbnb in California?

The character and geography of different cities and regions mean there's a coastal or beach vacation for every type of traveler.

More urban and urban-adjacent locales around San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego will naturally have more tourist attractions beyond the beach, while smaller towns in the north and central coast will offer a slower pace and more opportunities for seclusion and serenity.

This article offers a mix of both options and can help you start to pinpoint what kind of location best suits you.

What is the weather like in California?

While most of California enjoys sunny, warm climates throughout most of the year, the weather can vary depending on where you go.

For example, there's a quite popularly attributed to Mark Twain that goes "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco." The foggy city can indeed get chilly, even in summer, with the weather in the 60s and 70s.

Other Northern Cali beaches are definitely warmer than that, but the warmer beaches will be in SoCal.

What's the best time of year to visit the coast of California?

If you're looking to swim in the ocean, you'll need a warmer anytime other than summer in Northern California. In Southern California, the weather can be warm enough to swim from late spring to early fall, with summer being ideal.

For hiking and other out-of-the-water activities, the California coast is really a year-round destination, especially in a drought year like this past year was. If you want to be more certain of avoiding rain, plan for a trip anytime from around late May through September.

How do I find a cheap Airbnb in California?

The weather and peak vacation times typically mean higher prices. Summer is high season, as are weekends, holidays, and times when schools are on winter and spring break.

If you're willing to be more flexible, you can find a bargain by

If you're able to take some weekdays off, or book for September or October once most schools are back in session, for example, those are some ways to get cheaper prices during the warmer months.

Is it safe to book an Airbnb right now?

CDC guidelines indicate that vacation rentals are a safe travel choice because they allow people to minimize contact with vacationers outside of their household.

For added peace of mind, we've only highlighted those Airbnbs that have committed to following the company's Enhanced Clean guidelines.

What should I consider in booking an Airbnb?

It's important to read listings carefully so you know what you're getting, and also to remember that you're staying in a home rather than a hotel. The benefits of this can include access to a fully-stocked kitchen, or enjoying more privacy (and COVID safety).

But it also means you won't have turndown service, and you should remember that every home has its quirks. If you go in with your eyes open and choose a place with positive reviews, it can be a great way to travel.

More great Airbnbs in California

Airbnb

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