



PHOTO: VISIT HALF MOON BAY

Where: A 35-minute drive south of San Francisco leads to this charming seaside community bordered by lush green farms and the Santa Cruz Mountains on one side and stunning views of the Pacific Ocean on the other.

Why: In addition to plenty of recreational opportunities on land and sea, this former Portuguese fishing village offers quaint shopping, fabulous food and magnificent views.

Check-in Time: The gorgeous Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay is total luxury complete with a world-class spa. Ground floor rooms have patios with fire pits. Another great option is the New England-style Beach House at Half Moon Bay. Located steps away from the waves, each of the hotel's 54 suites has a patio or balcony overlooking the Pacific, and a mini kitchen. Breakfast and Wi-Fi are included. The separate living room even has a fireplace — a perfect setting for lounging with your girlfriends when the temperature dips.

West Coast Wonders: Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy hiking or biking along the six-mile Half Moon Bay Coastal Trail. Or dip your oars while watching the seals and birds in the protected waters of Pillar Point Harbor while kayaking with Half Moon Bay Kayak Company. Surfer girls can take the ultimate challenge by surfing at nearby Mavericks surfing spot where a big-wave competition takes place every winter. (Look for Gerard Butler in the film *Chasing*

Mavericks filmed here, due out this fall.) Ride horseback on the beach with Sea Horse Ranch. Take a picnic or bottle of wine and enjoy the miles of sandy beaches at Half Moon Bay State Park. Romance option: settle in on a blanket to watch the magnificent sunset from the park. Half Moon Bay is also a mecca for birdwatchers, as more than 400 species live here.



PHOTO: JAN SCHRODER

Above from top: Tidepools at Half Moon Bay; Pillar Point Harbor; Beach House at Half Moon Bay.



Cheesy Escape: Take a short drive further south down scenic Highway One to Pescadero to Harley Farms Goat Dairy, where you can frolic

with the goats and purchase some award-winning goat cheese, decorated with edible flowers from the beautiful garden. Two hundred goats are zealously guarded by a few intimidating llamas, and all cheese production is done on the premises.

Girls Want to Learn: Release your inner glass artist by creating your own glass sculpture in a class at Half Moon Bay Art Glass. Don't fear the flames: Owner and talented glass artist Douglass Brown guides you every step of the way, from dipping up the molten glass to shaping your own pumpkin, heart or paperweight. Then step next door for a wine tasting at La Nebbia



Winery, where vintner Kendyl Kellogg produces full-bodied reds. *Travelgirl tip:* Bring your own empty bottle and they'll fill and cork it for just \$5.

Allow a few hours to take in the shops, art galleries and restaurants lining Half Moon Bay's historic Main Street.



PHOTO: VICKI MOORE

Stroll Down Main Street: Allow a few hours to take in the shops, art galleries and restaurants lining Half Moon Bay's historic Main Street. If you're looking to take home a few local flavors, peruse the wines, cheeses and gift baskets at Half Moon Bay Wine & Cheese. Pick out your favorites by visiting the Wine Tasting Bar first. For kitchen items visit the fully stocked Toque Blanche.

Dining Time: You could plan an entire trip around the meals in this area. Start with breakfast at the quirky local favorite, 3-Zero Café, right in front of the Half Moon Bay Airport, where you'll find omelettes, frittatas, waffles and pancakes. Fresh food comes with a view at Half Moon Bay Brewing Company, where

the liveliest patio in town overlooks Pillar Point Harbor. The Blue Lady ghost is said to haunt the cliff-side home and former 1920's speakeasy where Moss Creek Distillery now serves up all-natural food, wild-caught seafood and organic vegetables with an unsurpassed coastal view. Seafood lovers will be in heaven with the coast sliders, one each of crab cake, yellow fin tuna and grilled salmon. Prepare to wait at Sam's Chowder House, one of the most popular restaurants along the coast. Grab one of their delicious cocktails such as the Ginger Limeade and relax in an Adirondack chair on the back patio. Enjoy the good life lounging around a fire pit while watching the waves and the passersby on the Coastal Trail below. When it's time to order, start with the exquisite lobster ceviche followed by the Hawaiian Escolar. So good you won't want to share even one bite with your girlfriends. Everything from pasta to focaccia is made in house at the 25-year-old Pasta Moon, where Chef/Owner Kim Levin supports local artisans and farmers, ranchers and fishermen.



Head here first: www.visithalfmoonbay.org



This page from top: Cheeses and goats at Harley Farms; Half Moon Bay's historic Main St.; Sliders at Moss Creek Distillery; Glass blowing at Half Moon Bay Art Glass; Frittata at 3-Zero Café.



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