

Monterey Bay Beaches!

Where to go and where to avoid

Asilomar State Beach, Pacific Grove

The northern portion of Asilomar Beach consists of rugged rock outcroppings with a few small beaches between them. Everything is connected by a network of pathways.

Monterey State Beach, Monterey

Though not as spectacular as the other beaches described here, it has the advantage of being one of the safest. The beach is sheltered from the fiercest ocean waves by the peninsula itself. Shallow sand extends some distance from the water's edge, which makes it good for wading. Still, one must be careful. This section is safe, but the further north up the coast, the more dangerous the currents. Marina can have powerful and deadly undercurrents!

Lover's Point, Pacific Grove

Beautiful alcove with gentle waters makes this area popular with open water swimmers and divers. This is a great area to launch a kayak or stand up paddle board from because of the easy waters and close proximity to kelp gardens and marine life. Use caution though! Venture beyond the small alcove and you can experience strong waves and undercurrents.

Carmel Beach, Carmel

This is the famous white sand beach that's mentioned in every tour guide. At about one mile long, it covers the entire length of Carmel's western shore from Pebble Beach to Carmel Point. Walking the length of the beach is a popular local activity. So is building sand castles. The texture of the sand is perfect for palace construction. Other popular activities are surfing and evening picnics.

Carmel River Beach

The ocean at Carmel River Beach is definitely not safe for swimming or wading. However, the lagoon is ideal for wading, even for little kids (properly supervised, of course). Even here, though, you need to be careful in the winter and spring when the river is flowing to the sea. The swift current can capture anyone who ventures into it. Be advised that during winter storms, the surf here can be extreme. It is common for waves to wash over the entire beach and into the lagoon on the other side. On such days, it is best to enjoy the scene from the road or from one of the trails.

Danger Zones!



The most dangerous beach

Is the one known locally as Monastery Beach, though formally it is the extreme southernmost portion of Carmel River State Beach. It is located a couple miles south of Carmel along Highway 1, half way between Carmel Meadows and Point Lobos. It is easy to identify by the white tower of the Carmelite Monastery directly across the highway. The majority of local ocean fatalities occur on this one beach, due to the steep drop-off of sand and unpredictable waves. Some folks grimly refer to it as "Mortuary Beach." If you visit this beach, stay on the inland side of the crest of sand, and you'll be much safer. Whatever you do, don't play in the water here and keep an extra close eye on the kids!