



## Explore the Splendor of the California Coast

AdChoices

By Michelle White

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Dying to get away from the city and reconnect with nature, but don't want to go too far? A road trip up the coast will reinvigorate you and regale you with extraordinarily breathtaking views. Highway 1 is an endless source of magnificent coastline and mountains, fields and forests. And, you can do it in a weekend - although the longer you have, the more you can enjoy.



From Los Angeles, begin on Pacific Coast Highway and progress north into Ventura County. You will soon begin to see stretches of the deep blue sea, but just wait until you rise a bit in elevation and find yourself among rustic forests on your right and steep bluffs leading down to the ocean on your left. Feel city stress slip away as you move into the majestic beauty. Too easily forgotten by the many residents striving to make it in hectic LA, it is for these resources that our state is so acclaimed. California is uniquely well-endowed with famous beaches, sunny climates and trees of the redwood and sequoia varieties, which are found nowhere else in the world. And, as you travel north along the coast, feel free to breathe a little more deeply, having left the smog behind.



A must-stop along the way is Jade Cove, especially if you're inclined to beachcombing or rock gathering. It is easy to park right on the west side of Highway 1, and then follow the trail that winds down the cliff until you reach the rocky beach. Climb around on the rocks, glimpse wildlife such as lizards among the boulders, and scan for goodies among the pebbles (my pockets were weighed down with all I could carry when I headed back up the trail - there is a sign prohibiting collection above the high tide level, but there are plenty of great specimens all around). As much as I love rocks I lacked the discerning eye to distinguish between jade and its more common look-alike serpentine, but I figured I was in the majority there anyway. I delighted in the simple pleasures of gathering the black and green stones, some rough and easily broken, others worn perfectly smooth by the tide. Find a good rocky perch and revel in the surf breaking directly in front of you. Catch the sea spray and savor a moment of utter peace.



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calendar

Tuesday May 20th

7:30 PM | Tartuffe: South Coast Repertory

Although there were more people at my next stop, McWay Falls, than I saw at other picturesque points along the Pacific Coast, any hiker hailing from Los Angeles would not fail to be enthralled with the site. In LA hikers must feel mixed emotions. We have a great variety of trails plus temperatures that allow for year-round hiking, yet we must put up with the graffiti rudely staining parts of Griffith Park (the largest municipal in the United States) and stretching even to the Angeles Crest national forest. Also, most given trails contain vast numbers of people on any fair-weathered day. Imagine having tranquil Jade Cove entirely to yourself. Most likely, you will. If you're looking for a true break from the grind and peace and quiet away from the city, a drive up the coast ensures spectacular sites with remote attendance, where you can pretend you're in your own private paradise.



McWay Falls is part of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park. I'd seen pictures online before I arrived, but I had no idea of the magnitude of the beauty that would wash over me upon arriving in the natural landscape and looking upon the eighty-foot Falls that dropped from woods and granite cliffs onto the beach. Oohing and aahing every which way, I tried to capture the incredible beauty by snapping endless pictures. My samples here still cannot do justice to this magical spot, but at least you can get a taste.



Fresh & saltwater union.

It is an especially unique and beautiful sight to behold the waves breaking high onto the shore. The frothy surf stretches up to the bottom of McWay Falls and mingles with its cascade. Or pan out and ponder how many fathoms deep the ocean has become where its hues darken from a vibrant turquoise to a deep, rich blue. Despite the reality of the cold Pacific, when gazing down upon the shallower aqua-blue water it was impossible not to imagine myself enveloped in warm, tropical waters.



The exquisite foliage lining the non-ocean side of the trail.

Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park also boasts lovely campsites that make you feel secluded within your own patch of redwoods. I highly recommend these campsites, but there are many others along the coast as well. Another benefit to a coastal road trip is its relative inexpensiveness. Tip: If you go as far as the Monterey Peninsula, stay at a hotel slightly inland, such as in the town of Seaside. If saving money is not a concern on this trip, live it up at the exquisite bed-and-breakfasts in Monterey or Carmel.



Close-up on McWay Falls with a shadow across it.

If you visit Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park in December or January, be sure to stop at the bench at the end of Overlook trail, a great place to watch for gray whales migrating southward to their breeding and calving grounds off the Baja California coast. Many whales pass close to shore at this point, and occasionally one will come into the mouth of the cove. In March and April, they can be seen returning north to their summer feeding grounds in the North Pacific. The rocky shoreline, rich in marine life, also provides access to the Julia Pfeiffer Burns Underwater Area, an underwater park offering exceptional scuba diving. Due to private property and steep bluffs, the beaches are less accessible as you move north out of southern California. However, the beauty is unparalleled. Why not take advantage where all the landlocked states cannot!

Season Finale

**9:00 PM** | Victory Lap Variety Show !

**Wednesday May 21st**

**12:00 PM** | Free LOST Exhibit at The Paley Center for Media in Beverly Hills, For a Limited Time Only!

**7:30 PM** | Tartuffe: South Coast Repertory Season Finale

**8:00 PM** | Surely Lorraine's Anime Wong at Malo's Silver Lake Sessions

**Thursday May 22nd**

**12:00 PM** | Free LOST Exhibit at The Paley Center for Media in Beverly Hills, For a Limited Time Only!

**7:30 PM** | Hovorostovsky @ LA Opera

**8:00 PM** | Tartuffe: South Coast Repertory Season Finale

**9:30 PM** | Comedy Palace

*Feature Article*

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Jade Cove is found 70 miles South of Monterey and 70 miles North of San Luis Obispo, between Gorda and Pacific Valley, on Highway 1. Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park is 37 miles south of Carmel (near Monterey) and 12 miles south of Pfeiffer Big Sur. The phone number is 831-667-2315. Named after Julia Pfeiffer Burns, a well respected pioneer woman in the Big Sur country, the park stretches from the coastline into nearby 3,000-foot ridges and features redwood, tan oak, madrone, and chaparral as well as the unforgettable falls. A panoramic view of the ocean and miles of rugged coastline is available from the higher elevations along the trails east of Highway 1. For more general information, check out <http://www.byways.org/browse/byways/2301/places/>. Photo credits: Michelle White & Jake Policky

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