



## **BIKING: San Francisco to Santa Monica (LA) – 5 Day Itinerary** *(505 Total Miles / Daily Average = 101 miles / Daily Range = 84-133 miles)*

### **Day One – San Francisco to Santa Cruz – 84 miles (elevation +4870 / -4838 ft)**

From San Francisco, our biking odyssey begins along a bike path past the Golden Gate Bridge and then rides through the Presidio before greeting the Pacific by Ocean Beach. Continuing south through the hills of Daly City, the route passes over Devils Slide before a pleasing coastal stretch to Half Moon Bay. South of Half Moon Bay, Highway One is less hilly and our route down the coast feels like it's a million miles away from the city. Numerous state parks and beaches line the route, as well as an historic lighthouse. We end the day in the surfer town of Santa Cruz, with its famous pier and boardwalk, where the laid back California lifestyle was practically invented.

### **Day Two – Santa Cruz to Big Sur – 91 miles (elevation +5686 / -5463 ft)**

From Santa Cruz to the Monterey Peninsula the coastal route weaves through farmland (watch for artichokes!) and along scenic dune areas with long stretches on bike paths. Along the way you may see sea lions and seals as you cross Elkhorn Slough at Moss Landing. The historic town of Monterey features Monterey Bay Aquarium and Cannery Row, made famous by writer John Steinbeck. From Monterey you'll take with a side trip out to scenic 17 Mile Drive to experience the storied golf courses of Pebble Beach and continue through Carmel, enjoying its white sandy beach and beautiful mission. South of Carmel, we enter the fabled Big Sur coastline, home to some of the most spectacular coastal scenery anywhere in the world. Here Highway One is often carved out of cliffs and ridges high above the Pacific Ocean with waves crashing below on rocky sea stacks. The ride finishes a short distance inland among the redwoods in the town of Big Sur.

### **Day Three – Big Sur to San Luis Obispo (SLO) – 110 miles (elevation +7329 / -7339 ft)**

The rest of the epic Big Sur coast dominates the first 50 miles of the ride today. Right off the bat you'll tackle the biggest hill of the tour as you climb above the Big Sur River past colorful cafes before descending back toward the ocean. Redwood canyons and waterfalls as well as panoramic views from scenic vistas line this stretch of the route. After the hills leading up to Ragged Point the terrain levels out as we ride through idyllic ranchland past an elephant seal colony and Hearst Castle before passing through the seaside village of Cambria. South of Cambria our route sticks close to the coast and winds through the picturesque towns of Cayucos and Morro Bay before skirting scenic Morro Bay National Estuary, home to an incredible diversity of bird life. Cycling inland from Morro Bay, you'll pass through idyllic ranchland on the way into the historic mission town of San Luis Obispo (voted happiest town in North America!)

### **Day Four – SLO to Santa Barbara – 133 miles (elevation + 5866 / - 6062 ft)**

Departing San Luis Obispo you'll head back to the coast and pass through Pismo Beach, another classic beach town before veering inland through rich farmland. The terrain features some rolling hills, but levels out as you pass through the sleepy town of Guadalupe before a short spin to Santa Maria. From Santa Maria, you'll quickly find yourself in the idyllic vineyards of the Santa Ynez winery region. After tackling the hills at the south end of Foxen Canyon Road you'll pass through the Danish town of Solvang as well as other small hamlets. A pleasing spin and climb through isolated country behind Solvang takes you out of the wine country area before you gain US 101 and climb over Gaviota Pass to get back to the coast. The coastal approach to Santa Barbara on US 101 is actually quite pleasant for cycling on a freeway and features expansive ocean views. As you near Santa Barbara, you'll take the traditional Coast Bike Route through Hope Ranch and bike along the waterfront before ending the day among the palm trees and sandy beaches of Santa Barbara.

### **Day Five – Santa Barbara to Santa Monica – 87 miles (elevation +2378 / -2378 ft)**

Southern California ambiance dominates the route today. From Santa Barbara to Ventura the route hugs the coast and features some more freeway riding and views of several classic surf spots. Past Ventura, you'll ride through urban areas and farmland before reaching the scenic northern Malibu coast. As you get close to the actual town of Malibu, you'll see classic California beach homes built right over the ocean. The last few miles of riding are on a bike path winding across the golden sands of the Santa Monica Beach to Santa Monica pier.

***\*\*Please note that all mileages and elevation gain/loss data are approximate only and will vary according to hotel location and actual routes ridden.\*\****



***Get Outside. We'll take you there....***

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