

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

# TOP 12 Free Things to Do

## Free Summertime Fun in Santa Cruz County

*Free fun on tap in California's iconic beach destination*

Visiting **Santa Cruz County** is more affordable than ever. This season, there are plenty of free activities and events to enjoy that won't cost a penny. Santa Cruz County may be known as a Nuclear-Free and Hate-Free Zone, but that's not all that's free! Listed below are the top 12 free things to do and see this spring and summer:

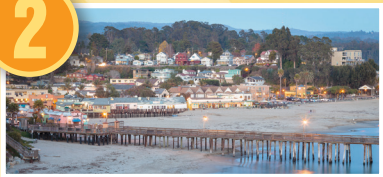


1



**VISIT THE "WORLD'S BEST SEASIDE AMUSEMENT PARK"!** The legendary Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is always admission-free. Enjoy a self-guided free walking tour of this historic seaside gem. The Boardwalk also hosts Free Friday night summertime concerts (more info below) and other free and fun events! And on Wednesday Nights, at 9:00 p.m. from June 17th to August 12th, bring your family and friends, your blankets and low back chairs, and settle in for some free classic movies, right on the sand.

2



**CONCERTS AND MOVIES IN CALIFORNIA'S OLDEST SEASIDE RESORT TOWN:** In addition to enjoying free Twilight Concerts on Wednesday Nights (more info below), gather on the sand for free movies on four

Fridays throughout the summer: August 21st and 28th, September 4th and 11th. Capitola also offers a free weekend and holiday shuttle, which takes visitors from the Crossroads Center parking lot on Bay Avenue to Capitola Village Memorial Day Weekend through the beginning of September!

3



**TAKE PART IN ANNUAL YEAR-ROUND EVENTS:** Have you ever watched sailboat races at sunset? Every week, from March 11th through October 28th, the Santa Cruz Harbor hosts the ever popular Wednesday Night Sailboat Races. Have a picnic on a beach blanket and enjoy the beauty of the sailboats, sunset, and sea. For your up-to-date Santa Cruz County event information go to [www.LetsCruzEvents.com](http://www.LetsCruzEvents.com)!

4



**TOUR THE HISTORIC AND ECLECTIC:** A variety of free walking tours bring to life the history of Capitola, the logging days of Boulder Creek, the Victorian homes and public murals of Watsonville, the outdoor art and historical architecture of Santa Cruz, and more. Visit the Jack O'Neill Mural near the Santa Cruz Wharf entrance and see the original site of the O'Neill Surf Shop, a California Historical Point of Interest. Nearby, a new plaque pays tribute to the Santa Cruz Surf Club. Adjacent to the 55-foot-long mural is the Jack O'Neill Lounge located in the Santa Cruz Dream Inn, where you will find photos and memorabilia from the O'Neill legacy.

5



**WATCH ANIMALS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITATS:** Free weekly guided nature walks of the Wetlands of Watsonville are an up-close way to experience the

*continued on back*

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continued from front

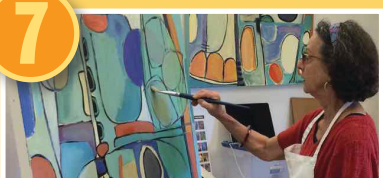
area's bird population. Visit Santa Cruz County's free **Wildlife Watching Guide** is a great way to get your bearing on where to go and what to look for. Or, stroll to the end of the **Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf** and watch the sea lions play and sunbathe, and shorebirds gliding across the sky. You may also catch the glimpse of a dolphin or sea otter. On weekends, take a guided tour on the wharf and learn about marine research, red tides and more.

6



**DISCOVER MUSEUMS:** Learn about Santa Cruz surfing legends, the farming methods of a bygone era, and more at admission-free museums such as the **Santa Cruz Surfing Museum**, **Agricultural History Project**, **San Lorenzo Valley Historical Museum**, **Capitola History Museum**, and the **Aptos History Museum**. The **Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History** at the **McPherson Center** and **Museum of Natural History** offer free admission the first Friday of every month. The **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center** features state-of-the-art displays, an exploration theater, interactive exhibits and more and is always free to the public.

7



**SAVOR FINE ART:** Peruse galleries exhibiting the work of local watercolor artists, metal sculptors, and more. The **Pajaro Valley Arts Council**, **Mary Porter Sesnon Gallery** at **UC Santa Cruz**, **Santa Cruz Art League**, and **Santa Cruz Mountain Arts Center** are some of the free galleries you'll find around town. Guests are invited to take a free studio tour of **Annieglass** in **Watsonville** Thursdays - Sundays at 1:30 p.m., or by appointment. For six Sundays throughout summer, **Capitola Village** is also the place for **Art and Music at the Beach**, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on June 28th and in July on the 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th, and in August on the 2nd and 9th.

The **Spring Art Market** at the **Tannery Arts Center** on Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. is free and features 50 artists, food trucks, kids' activities, and beer and wine. On the first Friday of each month, visit a wide array of venues and free art exhibits during the **First Friday Art Tour**. Also, **Scotts Valley** hosts its **Art and Wine Festival** August 15th - 16th.

8



**TAKE IN A SUMMER CONCERT:** Summertime means several opportunities for free seaside concerts! Every Friday night from June 12th through August 28th on **Main Beach**, original artists and bands from the '70s, '80s and '90s perform two free concerts at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., sponsored by the **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**. In **Capitola Village**, the tradition of free **Wednesday Night Twilight Concerts** continues in **Esplanade Park**, adjacent to the beach, June 3th through August 26th. An array of musical styles from jazz, western, Latin, swing, orchestra and rock and roll will perform at this family-friendly venue from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. In **Scotts Valley**, take in the tunes at **Music at Skypark**, held the last Sunday of the month from July through September.

9



**HIKE AMID TOWERING REDWOODS:** A number of parks in Santa Cruz County with great hiking trails are admission-free, including **DeLaveaga Park**, **Quail Hollow Ranch** and others. State parks like **Big Basin Redwoods State Park** or **Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park** charge a small fee for parking; other parking fees vary. And for more things to do outdoors, **Pinto Lake County Park** in **Watsonville** boasts a **Championship Disc Golf Course**. You can also play disc golf at **DeLaveaga Park** and **San Lorenzo Park** in Santa Cruz.

10



**ENJOY THE BEACH:** With 29 miles of coastline, finding an admission-free beach for playing in the surf or lazing away on the sand is easy. Favorites include **Main Beach**, **Capitola Beach**, **Rio del Mar Beach**, **Twin Lakes Beach** and **Seabright Beach**. Are you traveling with your pooch? See us online at [www.VisitSantaCruz.org](http://www.VisitSantaCruz.org) to find dog-friendly beaches as well as other attractions, restaurants, hotels and events that welcome your pup!

11



**PEOPLE-WATCH AND WINDOW-SHOP DOWNTOWN:** Stroll **Downtown Santa Cruz**, where pedestrian-friendly, tree-lined streets boast unique shops and sidewalk performers. The new mixed-use marketplace at **Front and Cooper Streets**, **Abbott Square Market**, hosts a full schedule of events, including outdoor movies, children's activities, trivia nights, and live music. Or peruse collectibles and treasures at the outdoor **Antique Faire** held the second Sunday of every month from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (weather-permitting).

12



**EXPLORE THE WILD BEAUTY OF CAMPUS:** The **Arboretum** at **UC Santa Cruz** offers free admission the first Tuesday of every month. Also located at **UC Santa Cruz**, the 30-acre **Farm** and 2-acre **Alan Chadwick Garden** are open to the public daily from 8 am to 6 pm, with a self-guided tour brochure available at the Farm entrances. Free, docent-led tours of the **UCSC Farm** are offered the first Sunday of the month from April through November, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Step into **Pogonip Open Space** right from campus; the **Rincon Trail** slopes down to the eastbound **Spring Box Trail**, where a quick stroll leads to a spring-fed koi pond. Back on the **Rincon Trail**, veer north to see 19th century limestone kilns and a spectacular rock garden dotted with notes from visitors.

*In addition, visitors who choose to travel mid-week can save money on lower hotel rates. And, Visit Santa Cruz County makes it easier than ever to plan a vacation online with [www.VisitSantaCruz.org](http://www.VisitSantaCruz.org). Information and ideas for summertime fun like surfing, kayaking, and visiting the **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** or **Roaring Camp Railroads** can all be found online.*

*Head over to the year-round visitor center at 303 Water Street in Santa Cruz, where you can find free information on a variety of topics, as well as **Santa Cruz County Traveler's Guides**, **Bicycle Adventure Kits**, and **Wildlife Watching Kits**.*

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