

This page is currently a work in progress...

A smattering of recommendations for various places I've stopped along the west coast of America.

Hot take: *Driving North up the 1 (San Francisco <> the California/Oregon border) is better than driving South down the 1 (San Francisco <> LA). It's less trafficked, and the views are stunning. Definitely less sunny, though.*

Advice: *Drive along the 1 as long as you can. You can't go wrong pulling over along the coast. Get out of your car, sit, breathe, and think about how big the world is.*

Preface: *These are places I stopped on various trips. This list is not exhaustive! Just because something is missing, doesn't mean it's not worth exploring! It probably just means I didn't have time to see it, or I didn't discover it on my journey.*

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Seattle

Coming soon... [DM me on Twitter](#) if you need Seattle recs.

Portland

Portland is all about beer + coffee + donuts + hipsters.

Must do -- *I had a couple days in Portland, and this is what I most enjoyed:*

- [Powell's City of Books](#) -- Truly iconic. Spend an afternoon getting lost here.
- Take the bus from downtown to Cathedral Park -- it passes through neighbourhoods that aren't your typical hipster paradise. There's a different side to Portland. It's worth seeing.
- [Cathedral Park](#) -- I really enjoyed a lovely afternoon strolling and napping in this gorgeous park. If you can catch it on a warm, sunny day, even better!

- Then, stroll over to [Occidental Brewing](#) and grab a beer at this low-key brewery. Good beer. Locals are very friendly.
- If it's raining, spend a day at [McMenamins Kennedy School](#), drifting between the various bars. Great with a group, or take a book and hole up by yourself. There's a movie theatre, to boot.
- [Laurelhurst Theatre](#) -- lovely old theatre. Lots of locals.
- [Teote House Cafe](#) -- is a MUST. Bowls (mole!). Patio. Mmm.
- If you need to get a workout in to burn off all the beer and donuts, [Planet Granite Portland](#) is massive, clean, and lovely.
- [The Grilled Cheese](#) -- eat in a school bus. Cheap, decent food, too.

Merp -- *take it or leave it:*

- Donuts. Portland is known for its donuts ([Blue Star](#), [Voodoo](#)). They were all decent. Bougie, designer donuts have become increasingly popular in many big cities, and these didn't stand out above the local ones I've had in other cities I've lived in (like the [Jelly Donut in San Francisco](#) -- *now closed, boooo!* -- or [Suzy Q in Ottawa](#)).

Getting around:

- Portland bus was great
- [Bike share](#) was great and very accessible

Eureka + Arcata

Eureka is WEIRD. Arcata is WEIRDER.

If you want some prep, watch the [Netflix miniseries Murder Mountain](#). We didn't have any problems while we were there at all. Lots of people live lots of normal lives there. It's definitely interesting to experience California away from the Bay Area and Hollywood.

- [Eureka Old Town](#) -- worth a stroll.
- [Carson Mansion](#) -- beautiful old house.
- [Downtown Arcata](#) -- worth parking somewhere around here and strolling around. It's quaint and hippie central and slow, sleepy.

Eureka to Mendocino

The drive from [Newport to Rockport \(along the 1\)](#) was one of the most breathtaking, beautiful drives of my entire life. I drove South to North, in the late afternoon on a December day.

Mendocino Area

Mendocino is pretty touristy. But it's so quaint and lovely. I personally enjoyed staying slightly outside of Mendocino (near Albion, see Airbnb recommendation below), and driving into Mendocino to enjoy the town, get groceries, and explore for short periods. I also went during low season (Christmas) and it was probably quieter than normal.

Do it -- *loved this stuff*:

- [Handcrafted Hideaway Near Mendocino](#) (Airbnb) -- We stayed at this *amazing*, perfect, quaint, homey cedar log cabin built by an artist. If you can, stay here for a couple nights, enjoy the wood stove, and cozy up.
- [Good Life Cafe](#) -- Good food. Hippie spot.
- [Stanford Inn](#) -- I tried to go here for lunch, but they were closed that day. I've received this recommendation from many friends, and even though I personally didn't make it, I've heard such good things that I'll pass along this reco to you, too.
- [Point Cabrillo State Park](#) -- Really lovely little park by the coast. Worth a short stop for a short walk.

Merp -- *take it or leave it*:

- [Glass Beach](#) -- Just alright. I've heard so many friends came and enjoyed this place. But I thought it was *totally* overrated. Maybe we didn't hit the right spot on the beach to find all the glass, but it was washed over and there was garbage everywhere. If you're driving by, maybe stop and see if you can find the good glass!

Between Mendocino and Marin

[Stewarts Point Store](#) -- a very sweet little general store. If I recall correctly, it's been around for hundreds of years, and they've done their best to maintain the original building. Good place for a pee stop and a cup of coffee.

Marin

[Hog Island Oyster Co.](#) -- GO GO GO here. Get the fire roasted oysters. Worth a splash out. Don't be afraid to share a table outside and chat with folks. We met a lovely man who has lived his entire life in the Bodega Bay area.

[Cowgirl Creamery](#) -- GO GO GO here.

The drive between the Golden Gate Bridge and Hog Island is pretty special. Enjoy it. Savour it. [It's longer, but take the 1](#) along "Shoreline Highway".

Hike #1 -- Hike down the back of Muir Woods National Monument. One of my favourite hikes. Start by parking across the street from the [California Alpine Club](#). Hop on the [Muir Woods Panoramic Trail](#) and zig-zag your way down into the valley where there's old growth forest. The first part of the hike is *hot* and sunny, and in the valley it's cool and shady. Take layers, sun screen, and lots of water (especially in summer).

Hike #2 -- Alamere Falls is a heavily trafficked hike. It's one of the few waterfalls that goes directly into the Pacific, along the California coastline. Aim to get there early, or on a weekday, as parking can be limited on weekends. [Start at the trailhead here](#), and you'll end up at [Alamere Falls here](#). Pack the usual (lunch and snacks, water, sunscreen). One of my favourite memories in California was falling asleep on the beach with my friends under the warm February sun.

San Francisco

[See my guide to San Francisco here.](#)