



LABOR DAY RUNAWAY: CARMEL VALLEY



Face it. Your Labor Day weekend will likely require a hoodie. And maybe even a scarf.

Trade your cold weather gear for shorts and flip-flops in Carmel Valley, an under-the-radar destination where cowboy culture meets cosmopolitan cool. And where you can actually get a sunburn.

STAY

Head inland from Highway 1 to **Quail Lodge**, where recently renovated rooms with ranch-inspired decor boast private balconies or patios. By night, gather with other guests in the lively lobby bar. By day, tee off, play tennis, or **tackle hairpin turns and log piles at the Land Rover Experience Driving School**, all on the resort grounds.

From \$195/night. 8205 Valley Greens Dr., Carmel (831-624-2888)

Splurge on a suite at **Carmel Valley Ranch**. Play takes priority here, with **tree swings, basketball, bocce, beekeeping courses, and nightly s'mores** topping the list of on-site activities. Don't miss dinner at the Lodge Restaurant: Chef Tim Wood whips up irresistible dishes using ingredients grown in the property's organic garden.

From \$385/night. One Old Ranch Rd., Carmel (831-625-9500)

DO

Hiking, biking and equestrian trails weave through 4,500 acres at **Garland Ranch Regional Park**, passing by wildflowers, waterfalls, tree-filled canyons and ponds. **For a challenge, take the Snively's Ridge-Sky Trail loop** — after climbing nearly 2,000 feet, stellar ocean views are your reward.

Free public access. 700 West Carmel Valley Rd., Carmel Valley (831-372-3196)

Nearly 20 wine tasting rooms call Carmel Valley home, with the majority clustered in Carmel Valley Village. Spend a sun-drenched autumn afternoon sipping your way through this rustic little town, and stop by the **Chesebro** tasting room to sample wine and see photos and paintings by several local artists. Save some time to take in the surrounding galleries and outdoor cafes, too.

EAT

Order a post-hike pint at **Baja Cantina**. Outdoor seats offer Santa Lucia Mountain views, and cool auto memorabilia covers the walls inside. Live music, hearty Mexican fare and **a tempting menu of margaritas** draw locals and travelers alike.

7166 Carmel Valley Rd., Carmel (831-625-2252)

Celebrating a special occasion? For a first-class treat, reserve a table at **Marinus at Bernardus Lodge**. Chef Cal Stamenov builds the seasonal menu around locally farmed and foraged elements, and the Wine Spectator-winning bottle list includes several Bernardus Winery blends. **Just down the hall, Wickets is a more casual but no less noteworthy option** complete with open-air seating overlooking the lush, well-landscaped grounds.

415 W. Carmel Valley Rd., Carmel Valley (831-658-3400)