

Follow the Yellow Brick Road to the Golden State for an Epic Road Trip

Written by Editorial

Tuesday, 11 September 2018 08:24 - Last Updated Thursday, 13 September 2018 14:48



Photo: @montawney

Though Dorothy was right in saying “there’s no place like home,” there is also no place like California, and a road trip around Cali’s southern parts is something you cannot skip out on.

No matter where you click your red heels three times to return to, you’ll be happy you followed the Yellow Brick Road to the Golden State where many different lands of Oz await.

Here are the top places to make time for during your SoCal road trip, from trying your luck at the tables of a picturesque desert oasis outside of San Diego to sipping on a cocktail garnished with a faux doobie aside the surfer-laden shores of Huntington Beach.

To fully immerse yourself in the experience, we suggest starting from Los Angeles and either taking a car down the coast to the San Diego area, or hopping on Amtrak’s Pacific Surfliner Train for a relaxed and scenic trek, sans the stress of traffic.

Stop 1: Willows Hotel & Spa



Photo: @viejascasinoandresort

The first stop to make is an unexpected one. Head straight through San Diego and out to the surrounding desert. Just when you start to wonder if you’ve taken the wrong turn on the Yellow Brick Road, you’ll come upon [Viejas](#) -- an oasis where all your wildest casino dreams can come true.

But this AAA Four Diamond casino and resort doesn’t only offer up world-class gaming in the form of thousands of slot machines, table games, and an off-track betting area. It also serves up stellar steak at its AAA Four Diamond Grove Steakhouse, as well as a luxurious shopping experience, and so much more.

Whether gambling is your thing or not, you’ll love life here at Viejas. This is especially true if you’re staying at the resort’s newest addition -- it’s adult-only tower, [Willows Hotel & Spa](#). The tower’s 159 VIP suites bring a new sense of luxury to the experience at Viejas that includes the property’s luxurious spa facilities.

It would be a shame if the decor of this resort did not come up in conversation. Sleek and sexy, every piece of furniture and every little detail was perfectly placed with great care. From the vibrant turquoise gemstone handles on the bedside tables to the drool-worthy pink chairs at the spa’s welcome desk, you’ll wish that your home could even come *close* to someday looking this fabulous.

Stop 2: Sip & Cycle in San Diego

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Photo: @thestylishhousewife

As you watch the desert disappear in your rear view mirror, look ahead to the tour of San Diego that awaits. Cycle your way through some of the best bars in San Diego via [Social Cycle](#).

Don't underestimate the challenge this presents, especially as you get deeper into your drinks. Nevertheless, it's a great way to see the city (and frustrate the local drivers, which is far more entertaining than one may think).

Stop 3: Solamar Hotel



Photo: @hotelsolamar

San Diego kills it at boutique hotels, and Kimpton's [Solamar Hotel](#) ranks amongst the top. Perfectly located in the Gaslamp District with the East Village, Petco Park, and the San Diego Convention Center right out its front door, this Kimpton property is a hotspot for both leisure and business travelers.

Within moments of stepping in the doors of Solamar, you'll be lured into the renowned Jsix Restaurant. On any given night here you'll find a mix of both guests and locals indulging in Executive Chef Anthony Sinsay's sustainably and locally-sourced creations that will leave you begging for more. Using farm-to-table ingredients whenever possible, Chef Sinsay has masterfully weaved his Filipino background into the American cuisine served here that will surely be unlike anything you've ever eaten.

Pre *and* post-dinner, hop on the elevator and ride it to the top where you'll find heaven on earth in the form of the hotel's rooftop bar, Upper East. The vibe here is VIP, but not the type of VIP that requires being on a list.

The favorite event at this perfectly cosmopolitan spot? Veuve Around the Clock. Grab the iconic yellow/orange plastic cup and fill it with Veuve Clicquot for just \$5 at 5:00, \$6 at 6:00 and so on, until 8 p.m. rolls around, and you've Veuved yourself into oblivion.

Stop 4: Hotel Palomar

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Photo: @palomarsandiego

Hop in an Uber and continue down the Yellow Brick Road downtown to San Diego sophistication at its finest at the city's sister Kimpton property, [Hotel Palomar](#).

Here you'll revel in the moody, chic vibe, but be sure to carve out some time to dine on truly delectable eats at the hotel's signature restaurant, Curadero. And, after a night out on the town has you hankering for some nourishment, Hotel Palomar will step in as your Glinda the Good Witch. Its late-night taco window is open until the wee hours of the night so you can go to bed knowing you ended the night on a good note.

Stop 5: Shorebreak Hotel



Photo: @shorebreakresort

Watch the Technicolor scenery come to life as you venture up the California coast from San Diego to Huntington Beach, the *original* Surf City USA. And you just may find yourself calling this spot the Emerald City.

Shorebreak Hotel is nothing short of the glitz and glimmer that Dorothy saw when she first stepped foot into the Land of Oz.

Just steps away from the ocean, Shorebreak has brought to life the beachside dream we have all mourned could not be a reality. Mourn no more, because at Shorebreak, Instagram *is* real life and everything *is* as pretty as it seems.

No tiny detail was left untouched in the creation of this perfectly beachy getaway, and it shows.

The swooning you'll do over the decor will certainly put Dorothy's love of her ruby red slippers to shame.

Speaking of swooning, it's impossible to get enough of the food and cocktails at the hotel's restaurant, Pacific Hideaway. Executive Chef Wyatt Lash brings to colorful life island-inspired food such as fried avocado tacos, seasoned with tamarind and chiles. The do-not-miss item on the menu? Beef tartare. The dates, watermelon radish, quail egg and accompanying duckfat cracker will quickly make it one of your favorite dishes *of all time*.

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Photo: @shorebreakresort

But what will really send you “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” will be the cocktails that Shorebreak’s Great Oz, Casey Lyons serves. You’ll initially be sold on the names that include Oops I Did it Again, Tourist Trap, Dazed and Confused, Basic, and a handful of other gems, but the presentation and the taste will be the real kickers that will keep you coming back.

The next time you feel the need to get out of Kansas, check out these SoCal hot spots for a trip that will take you down the Yellow Brick Road and to all the Emerald Cities the Golden State has to offer.