

# California coast offers state's own version of fall colors

by Roger Petterson  
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It's time to schedule some autumn travel, and if you plan how you can combine pumpkins and fall foliage with time on beaches along a scenic stretch of California coast.

The Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival — [miramar-events.com/pumpkinfest/](http://miramar-events.com/pumpkinfest/) — is a great excuse to head for a little section of the California Coast stretching from San Francisco south toward Monterey Bay. The festival sounds a little like a Midwest county fair with handcrafts, pie-eating contests, lots of music by regional bands, and pumpkins so big they have to be weighed on heavy-duty industrial scales. Click on "About the Event" and "Quick Facts" to get an idea of the variety of food and drink, schedules for stage shows, and events such as the scarecrow contest. Look for "Miramar Events Home" at the bottom of the page for more events coming this fall.

Don't worry. That's not the only thing to see and do in Half Moon Bay — [visithalfmoon-bay.org/](http://visithalfmoon-bay.org/) — which is just a half-hour or so drive south of San Francisco on California's scenic Highway 1. Along with wandering around the town, you can try your hand at surfing or kayaking (the water is described as very cold), spend some lazy time exploring tide pools, or head to sea on a fishing trip. Check the links on the left side of the main page for details on beaches, sea life, bird watching, photography and driving tours. And look through the entries under "Itineraries" and try the photo gallery for extra reasons to visit.

It's not all about the sea

coast. Overlooking Half Moon Bay, the state's Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve — [tinyurl.com/6lw6s](http://tinyurl.com/6lw6s) — has California's signature tall trees, 21 miles of trails and mountain views.

Half Moon Bay sits in San Mateo County — [smc.truebluelocal.com/](http://smc.truebluelocal.com/) — which takes in the urban edges of the San Francisco Bay along with coastal scenery, seafood, and locally produced cheeses and wines. Browse through "Nature" for spots such as the Ano Nuevo State Reserve, the largest mainland breeding colony of northern elephant seals, the Japanese Tea Garden, beaches and lighthouses.

Stop to visit one of California's oldest wineries, the Woodside Vineyards — [woodsidesvineyards.com/](http://woodsidesvineyards.com/) — at the San Mateo County town of Woodside. Check out that and other towns at [SanMateo.net](http://SanMateo.net) — [sanmateo.net/travel/](http://sanmateo.net/travel/) — including tiny Princeton-by-the-Sea and the surfing haven of Montara.

Drive on down the coast to Santa Cruz County — [santa-cruzca.org/](http://santa-cruzca.org/) — for more spectacular beaches and redwoods. There's a detailed beach guide that even lists four best choices for families under "Things to Do," along with tips on outdoor activities including windsurfing and kiteboarding. If you don't want to spend all your time at the beach, click on "Places & Maps" for an interactive map that will take you to Web pages on the coastal artisans' enclave of Davenport, wooded Scotts Valley, and picturesque Santa Cruz.

Seriously think you'll have any time left for more sight-seeing? Keep heading south through Monterey Bay and beyond with the help of California's Central Coast — [central-coast-tourism.com/](http://central-coast-tourism.com/) — a guide to that part of the state that includes the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Big Sur, the Hearst Castle and still more beaches. Printing imperfections present during scanning



Visitors explore the Santa Cruz Boardwalk. Stephen Dunn / Getty Images

