

A CALIFORNIA ROAD TRIP

Background - Californians love to drive and one reason is that there is so much to see and do in Northern California. If you are thinking about a Northern California Road Trip before or after attending the Extra 2011 West NMRA Convention, get out your California map and follow along...

Advance Section

If you take part in the Advance Section on the weekend at the start of the Convention, you'll need to get from the Bay Area to [Sacramento](#) for the convention itself. However, we'll take the more leisurely route... instead of taking the Interstate (I-880) through Oakland (2 hours to drive to Sacramento), this route will take you along levees through the little towns that exist along the [California Delta](#) (it takes several hours or more depending on how often you stop). From San Jose, take I-680 north. From the Fremont area, work your way over to I-680 north from I-880. From the East Bay, take I-238 and continue onto I-580 before turning north on I-680. Upon reaching Walnut Creek continue north on I-680, then turn northeasterly on Highway 242, and then east on Highway 24 toward Pittsburg and Antioch. In Antioch, we'll turn off Highway 24 onto Highway 160 through the Delta.

The [Highway 160 driving tour](#) follows the Sacramento River all the way to Sacramento through the historic towns of [Isleton](#) (known for its Spam contest and crawdad festival), [Walnut Grove](#), and [Locke](#) (the only town in the U.S. built entirely for the Chinese by the Chinese). This road is called a "levee road", since it is built on top of the levees along the river which protect the adjacent farm land. You will quickly note that the surrounding farmlands are below the water level of the Sacramento River! Farmers built the levees to protect their land from flooding. Over the years, continual settlement of the land has resulted in the farmlands being below the level of the river. Stop for a soda or have a great meal at one of the small levee towns. Most [restaurants](#) also have boat docks where boaters can tie up. When Highway 160 crosses Interstate 5, jump on the interstate north for the last few miles into Sacramento—the [State capital](#).

Stay on I-5 North into Sacramento and exit at J Street to get to [Old Town](#) Sacramento, where you can spend a couple of hours or a whole day. This was the original westerly terminus of the [Central Pacific Railroad](#). This unique 28-acre National Historic Landmark District and State Historic Park was built in 1849 and is located along the Sacramento River. Old Town has shopping, dining, entertainment, historical attractions and world-renowned museums set within the time of the California Gold Rush and the Transcontinental Railroad. The cornerstone of Old Town is the [California State Railroad Museum](#). There are a number of restaurants in Old Town, from fast food to very nice. Our favorite ritual is to wander over to the [Delta King](#) (a sternwheeler and hotel tied up on the river past the train station) for a cocktail at the Delta Bar and Grill (they also serve small plates). We usually have dinner at the Pilothouse Restaurant (also located on the Delta King), or we have dinner at [Fat City Bar and Cafe](#). If you want a great hamburger, try [Fanny Ann's Saloon](#). If you have lunch or dinner at this old narrow, three-story walk-up, be sure to CAREFULLY pay attention to the signs on the doors of the restrooms and follow the arrows; many people don't and go in the wrong door!

The next morning, head over to [Sutter's Fort](#). John Augustus Sutter came to California in the 1840s and secured a land grant from the Mexican government covering 49,000 acres. In 1848, Sutter hired James Marshall to build a sawmill for him on the American River...we'll shortly learn of the importance of that sawmill. Sutter's Fort was a godsend to many of the early settlers coming overland to California before the Gold Rush, including the survivors of the [Donner Party](#). You can tour Sutter's Fort and the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park (see below) in one day.

After touring the fort, take Highway 99 north to I-80 toward Reno. About 35 miles northeast of Sacramento is the city of Auburn, exit onto Highway 49 south toward Coloma in [Gold Country](#) (this links to a virtual tour through the Gold Country). Highway 49 ([Map of Highway 49](#)) follows the "[Mother Lode](#)" from Sierra City in the north to Oakhurst south of Yosemite. The "Mother Lode" was the envisioned

main gold vein and primary source of the gold being recovered in rivers and streams along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In reality though, the gold being recovered was not from one vein, but from a general region.

About 25 miles south of Auburn is Coloma, the site of James Marshall's famous sawmill at the [Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park](#). It was here that James Marshall looked down in the tailrace of the sawmill and picked up the most famous gold nugget in history. The sawmill has been recreated and you can stand along the American River and try to understand what it was like, some 160 years ago, to find a single rock which changed history forever.

Highway 49 is generally a slow, two-lane road. It's a drive in which you will want to take your time and stop at the historic towns along the route. However, if necessary, it is possible to reach [Mariposa](#) on the south end of Highway 49 in a few hours of hard driving. If you do, you will miss some of the charm of the Mother Lode. While some towns along Highway 49 have all of the character of a strip mall, other towns that have retained their charm and have become our favorites.

Continuing south on Highway 49, skip Placerville and instead plan to spend an hour or so in the towns of [Amador City](#) and [Sutter Creek](#) (yes, it is named after the same Sutter!) Amador City and Sutter Creek have a number of interesting antique shops, which are worth visiting as informal museums even if you don't collect antiques. There are charming bed & breakfast places to stay in both towns. This link is a map and information about the many [Sierra Foothills Wineries](#) in this area.

South of the towns of Sutter Creek and [Jackson](#), leave Highway 49 for a short drive through "downtown" [Mokelumne Hill](#). This unpretentious little community will illustrate what most of the Gold Rush towns looked like in the 1800's before people started fixing them up. Last time we were there, there was an interesting deli with outside seating in case you haven't had lunch yet. If you are the adventuress type, there are [gold mine tours, zip lines, and caverns](#) to explore between Sutter Creek and Columbia to the south.

Continuing south on Highway 49, we will come to [Angels Camp](#), home of the [Jumping Frog Jubilee and County Fair](#). (Made famous by Mark Twain in his story about "[Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog](#)".) At Angels Camp, turn east on Highway 4. A few miles up Highway 4, turn right (south) onto "Parrots Ferry Road" at Vallecito (no services). We are heading toward the charming Gold Rush town of Columbia. After dropping down to the North Fork of the [Stanislaus River](#) and climbing up the other side (this road building technique of contouring along at an elevation of 1,500-2,000 feet and then twisting and turning down to a major river crossing and back up the other side should be expected by now), you will come upon the fascinating town of [Columbia](#) (which is also a State Park). Columbia is the best preserved Gold Rush town. Columbia was one of the most important towns in the southern mines. Besides wonderful period shops, there is a fun stagecoach ride. There are charming places to stay, including the famous [Columbia City Hotel and the Fallon Hotel](#). Don't miss the [Columbia Candy Kitchen](#) where they have been hand-making chocolates and candy since 1928.

Continuing south on Parrots Ferry Road, we regain Highway 49 and roll into the town of [Sonora](#). Sonora has a number of chain motels and other places to stay and thus makes another good place to stop for the night. If you'd like a cozy place to stay, there are a number of bed and breakfast places located in original buildings and homes.

If you are a narrow gauge fan, you might want to make a detour here and head east on Highway 108, turning off at Standard for a short drive into the little town of [Tuolumne](#). There is little left of the [West Side Lumber Company](#), but fans won't want to miss it. You can hike from the former station of [Friedenberg](#) (approximately milepost one point five by the original railroad timetables), to the station of River (milepost seven), where the tracks crossed the north fork of the Tuolumne on a large wooden trestle. Much of the track through this area still remains undisturbed, more than 20 years after the last train rolled by.) Here is a [link](#) with GPS directions on how to drive close to the remains of the Bourland

Trestle. This is a class II road, which means you should use a SUV or pickup with higher ground clearance; do NOT use a regular car or you may get stuck.

From Sonora, drive just 3 miles south to [Jamestown](#), where you can [pan for real gold](#), and of course you can't miss the wonderful [Railtown 1897 and the Historic Sierra Railroad Shops](#), also known as the "Movie Railroad." They run steam train rides on weekends from April through October on the hour from 11-3 (check their website for current schedule). The incredible, original roundhouse and shops are available to tour 7 days a week. Check the [schedule](#) to get tickets to ride on the steam-powered Sierra Railroad excursions out of Railtown 1897. Sierra Railroad #3 was just restored and has appeared in many movies, including *High Noon*, *The Great Race*, *Bound for Glory*, *Back to the Future III*, and *Unforgiven* as well as many TV shows, including *Lone Ranger*, *Petticoat Junction* (look for the famous water tank next to the station), *Rawhide*, *Death Valley Days*, *Lassie*, *Gunsmoke*, *Bonanza*, and *Little House on the Prairie*. Be sure to also take in the tour of the roundhouse...very little has changed in the past 100 years and this tour will give you hundreds of ideas for detailing an engine house. After your train ride, head into Jamestown for lunch. Scattered among the antique shops are a number of interesting lunch places. One of our favorites is at one of the old hotels with outside seating—we'll let you figure out which one you like!

There are three ways to get to Yosemite from the west side of the Sierras. Which way you should drive depends upon the rest of your itinerary. One option is to follow Highway 120 into Yosemite (this is the shortest route to Yosemite Valley) from a turnoff from Highway 108/49. Or you might want to take the long way to Yosemite and spend the night at [Oakhurst](#) (lots of hotels and restaurants) in order to have plenty of time to see the amazing [Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias](#), and/or ride the [Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad](#) at Fish Camp (they operate some ex-WSL Company equipment), on your way to Yosemite Valley. No photograph can prepare you for just how huge the Giant Sequoia trees are. They are definitely one of the great natural wonders of the World. (Trivia: California has the largest living things, the giant Sequoia trees; the tallest living things, the Redwood trees; and the oldest living things, the Bristlecone Pine trees.) If you take Highway 120 into Yosemite, you can also drive south on Highway 41 to reach the Giant Sequoia trees and the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad.

If you are not going to follow our described route over Tuolumne Meadows (directions listed below) to the east side of the Sierras, you might want to take Highway 120 into Yosemite Valley in order to get a taste of the high country.

Our favorite way to enter Yosemite is to use Highway 140, which follows a portion of the long-abandoned [Yosemite Valley Railroad](#).

Whichever way you are planning to use to enter Yosemite Valley, for now continue south on Highway 49 from Jamestown. Highway 120 will join our route at the small community/ghost town of [Chinese Camp](#). If you are going to use the Highway 120 entrance into Yosemite, continue on Highway 120 at the south end of Don Pedro Reservoir. (Look across the lake and you can see the old roadbed of the [Hetch-Hetchy Railroad](#).) Highway 120 goes straight to the Yosemite Highway 120 entrance station. If you are going to take the long way to Yosemite via Oakhurst, or follow the [Yosemite Valley Railroad](#) to Yosemite along Highway 140, turn right onto Highway 49. Watch carefully for the turnoff to Highway 49 at the community of [Moccasin](#) (where the fish hatchery is located—it's fun to feed the fish) and stay on Highway 49 toward the town of Coulterville (there are only a few restaurants and places to stay in this little town). South of Coulterville, Highway 49 curves and twists down to a crossing of the Merced River at the now-flooded town of [Bagby](#). (Trivia: Bagby was the location of the famous Yosemite Valley Railroad double water tanks—they are now located at the Highway 140 entrance to Yosemite just off of Highway 140 in the community of El Portal, along with the Bagby Station, YVRR Caboose 15, and Hetch-Hetchy Shay locomotive #4.) As you cross over the new high bridge over the upper reaches of McClure Reservoir, you will also be crossing the old [Yosemite Valley Railroad](#) right-of-way which was on the north side of the river.

About 15 miles south of Bagby is [Mariposa](#). Mariposa has a number of motels and fast food restaurants. To stay in Yosemite or just outside Yosemite, will need to make reservations as early as early as you can, especially during the summer. If you want to stay in the Park, [reservations](#) can be made up to one year and one day in advance. Even if you haven't made reservations earlier, check now to see if there have been cancelations. Even though the Park is crowded in the summer, don't miss spending at least a day here if this is your only chance. The newest motel in El Portal on Highway 140 is called the [Yosemite View Lodge](#)—the next closest is the [Cedar Lodge](#) (owned by the same family), which is on Highway 140 opposite the stop at Incline on the Yosemite Valley Railroad. From the parking lot of the motel, you can look across the Merced River and see the remains of the 8,300-foot-long logging incline which came down from the top of Trumbull Peak. The motel has a coffee shop-type restaurant. For a more classy dinner, try the restaurant at the Yosemite View Lodge at El Portal just up the road.

The next morning, head for the fabulous [Yosemite National Park](#) (another web site with lots of information is the [Yosemite Web Index](#)) . If you only have a single day to spend in Yosemite, I would park your car at the Day Parking lot in Curry Village, ride the free bus shuttle to the Village Store and grab some fixings for lunch (or go to the deli there and pick up sandwiches), then take the shuttle to [Happy Isles](#), and then hike up to [Vernal Falls](#) for lunch next to the Merced River. The hardy ones can continue up the trail to [Nevada Falls](#). A great website that has descriptions of Yosemite's hikes can be found at <http://www.yosemitemhikes.com/>. If you are not into hiking, walk over to the Visitor Center and then wander around the meadows and take the path along the river—there are fantastic views in all directions. Fortunately , 2011 is not a typical year and you can expect that Yosemite Falls will be still following in July unlike normal years. There will also be views of El Capitan, Half Dome, Sentinel Rock, and the other famous landmarks which have delighted tourists since the late 1800s.

For us, a trip to Yosemite in summer means one thing—[Tuolumne Meadows](#)! This is the true high country of the Sierras, and Tuolumne Meadows is as close as you can get to what John Muir called the “Range of Light” without backpacking into the wilderness. To get to Tuolumne, backtrack on Highway 140 to the well-marked Big New Oak Flat Road toward Tuolumne Meadows and then, after climbing up out of the Merced River gorge, turn east on Highway 120 at Crane Flat (also known as the [Tioga Road](#)). (It is worthwhile to pick up a Road Guide in the Visitor Center or General Store before starting your trip to Tuolumne so that you can better appreciate the roadside attractions along your way.)

If you have the time, walk into the [Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias](#). The Redwoods along the California coast are the tallest trees in the world — the Sequoias are the biggest trees in the world. (The oldest trees in the world are the Bristlecone Pines on the east side of the Sierras.) The hike follows one of the original roads from Big Oak Flat to the Valley and includes one of the famous tunnel trees—in the old days, you could drive through the base of one of the large trees. The good news is that it's an easy downhill hike of about 2 miles. However, the bad news is that it is a 400-foot uphill hike to get back to your car. (If the hike is too strenuous, you can take a shuttle to the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias at the south entrance to Yosemite (near Wawona).

Back on Highway 120 heading toward Tuolumne Meadows, continue east as the highway rolls along through Red Fir forests and past small tarns, slowly climbing up the gradual west slope of the Sierras. Be sure and stop at [Olmsted Point](#) just before you arrive at beautiful [Tenaya Lake](#). If you are lucky, you will be greeted by a [marmot](#) sunning on one of the nearby granite slabs at the Point. Look southwesterly and you will see Half Dome and Tenaya Canyon—you are now higher than the top of Half Dome which you were looking up at the day before in the Valley!

Passing Tenaya Lake, we pass a number of granite domes left over from the last Ice Age before dropping gradually into Tuolumne Meadows. Tuolumne Meadows is the largest subalpine meadow in the Sierras and is bisected by the Tuolumne River. We always time our trips to reach Tuolumne Meadows at lunch time so that we can get a hamburger and chocolate shake from the small lunch

counter here (the general store and lunch counter are in a canvas tent since the entire facility is open only during the summer months). I doubt that the hamburgers are that special here, but they have always tasted so good after returning to our parked car after a multi-day backpack trip out of Tuolumne Meadows. Tuolumne Meadows is on the Pacific Coast Trail, the T-Y Trail from Lake Tahoe to Yosemite, and the John Muir Trail from the Valley to Mt. Whitney—you will always see backpackers and rock climbers headed out or coming in for provisions. After lunch, we like to roam out across the meadow and soak up some sunshine. However, be careful since you are at elevation 8,600 feet—wear your sunscreen or you will quickly burn! [Tuolumne Meadows hiking](#) is fantastic and a favorite place.

For the ultimate experience, get a reservation at the [Tuolumne Meadows Lodge High Sierra Camp](#) (remember, reservations are needed a year in advance, although you can sometimes get a last minute cancellation). The accommodations are primitive (canvas tents, single cots with Army blankets, wood stoves, candles in lieu of electric lights) but the camp has a dining room and hot showers.

Mornings at the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge are a special delight, with a large breakfast family-style and the sound of the musical Merced River just outside the door (Anyone can eat in the restaurant.). It is easy to spend a couple of hours sitting on a rock near the river, reading a book to the sound of the river and birds or to grab a knapsack and take the trail to [Elizabeth Lake](#) or even hike along the [John Muir Trail](#) toward [Lyell Canyon](#).

When you are ready to leave Tuolumne Meadows behind, head east again on Highway 120 toward [Tioga Pass](#). Tioga Pass tops out at 9,945 feet above sea level and gets very close to timber line. As you leave the top of this pass at [Dana Meadows](#), you will quickly see the dramatic difference between the relatively gradual slopes of the western Sierra Nevada Mountains and the sudden drop-off of the eastern slope. In the next 13 miles, the highway will drop over 3,100 feet to the town of Lee Vining. Just stay off the brakes on the way down!

There are many [activities near Lee Vining](#). At the junction of Highway 120 and 395, you have a choice. You can head north toward [Lake Tahoe](#) or detour south 26 miles to [Mammoth Lakes](#). While Mammoth Lakes is a world-class ski area during the winter months, it also has a large number of summer activities such as mountain biking, fly fishing, hiking, and natural hot springs, in addition to a large variety of lodging and restaurants for all tastes and pocketbooks. If you find yourself at this intersection at lunchtime, head just back up Highway 120 to the gas station and the Whoa Nellie Deli for some unbelievable food!

Heading north on Highway 395 toward Lake Tahoe, stop at the [Mono Lake Visitor Center](#) to learn about this fascinating inland lake with no natural outlet (located just north of the town of Lee Vining). North of Mono Lake is the turnoff for [Bodie State Historic Park](#). Bodie is one of the best ghost towns in the West and was once a rip-roaring mining town until the mines closed. Those citizens still remaining finally left town, but in the process left behind their possessions. Bodie then remained under the protection of a caretaker for decades, discouraging vandals and antique collectors and now, under the care of the State, remains in a state of "arrested decay." Look in the windows on stores along the main street and you will still see stock on the shelves and whiskey bottles behind the bars. Part of the road into the park is dirt washboard, but that just helps set the tone for the desolation of Bodie. There are no services, so bring your own lunch and drinks.

North of Bodie is the small town of [Bridgeport](#). If you haven't had lunch yet, the hotel is nice. There are also a few non-chain fast food establishments (you know that you are away from the more developed areas when the fast food places don't advertise on television!)

If you are running out of time, you can turn east on Highway 108 north of Bridgeport and cross back over the Sierras at Sonora Pass ([old Sonora-Mono Toll Road](#)) built in 1864. While Highway 108 starts out innocently following the Walker River, it soon narrows and twists its way steeply (very steeply!) up the eastern escarpment of the Sierras. While the road is paved all of the way now, it narrows to little more than one lane in places with hairpin turns which climb 20-30 feet per turn. If you

choose this escape route, just take your time and think about wagon teams struggling up this same grade! Once at the top, the road improves dramatically and eventually rolls into the town of Sonora that we passed through days before. However, don't try this road in a large RV or if pulling a trailer!

Continuing north on Highway 395 through the high desert of sagebrush, we eventually pass through the small community of Walker and the turnoff for Highway 89. Highway 89 will get you to two other cross-Sierra passes, either Ebbetts Pass on Highway 4 or Carson Pass on Highway 88, both of which lead back to the San Joaquin Valley and civilization. Like Sonora Pass, the road up to Ebbetts Pass on Highway 4 is narrow and twisting, although not as steep as Sonora Pass. By contrast, Carson Pass is a piece of cake and has some of the most impressive scenery of the three passes.

However, we will continue up Highway 395, passing into Nevada (casinos lining the highway at [Topaz Lake](#) are the first clue!) Twenty miles north, you have another choice to make. You can continue on Highway 395 to [Carson City](#), Nevada's State capital and visit the [Nevada State Railroad Museum](#) at Carson City and the [V&T Railroad](#) at [Virginia City](#). Carson City has a number of places to stay and eat. The other option is to turn west to [Lake Tahoe](#).

To do this, turn left on Nevada Route 206 and then take 207 west toward the Kingsburg Grade to South Lake Tahoe. The Kingsburg Grade is wide but climbs steeply up to the top of the grade and then drops down to South Lake Tahoe and Stateline.

[South Lake Tahoe](#) and [Stateline](#) are popular summer destinations at Lake Tahoe and it is best to make reservations in advance, especially if you roll in on a Friday or Saturday night. Stateline has a few nice casinos with the typical great buffets. For the family, there is a great 2 hour boat cruise from South Shore to Emerald Bay aboard the [M.S. Dixie II](#).

From South Lake Tahoe, drive north on Highway 50 to "the wye" and turn onto Highway 89 to continue up the west shore of Lake Tahoe, past [Emerald Bay](#) and summer cabins overlooking the lake to [Tahoe City](#), an interesting town with a lot of choices for lodging and eating in the area because of its proximity to the winter ski resorts at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. There are a number of nice restaurants along the water in Tahoe City also. Take time to check out the huge trout at Fanny Bridge, which is the unofficial name of the bridge over the Truckee River right at the Lake Tahoe outlet (named because of the fannies from people leaning over the railing watching and feeding the giant trout...you get the idea.)

From Tahoe City, continue north on Highway 89 to [Truckee](#), by following the Truckee River, the only outlet for Lake Tahoe. Much of this highway was once the right-of-way for the narrow gauge Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company.

Truckee is worth a stop and is a great place to eat and wander around. The main street parallels the Union Pacific Railroad yards (it will always be the Southern Pacific Railroad in my mind). Westbound freights grind through this yard uphill, headed for Donner summit, while eastbound freights roll through accompanied by the sounds of dynamic brakes. There are some interesting shops to browse while waiting for the next train and you need only to step back out on the sidewalk to watch them pass.

Just west of Truckee on the south side of I-80 is [Donner Memorial State Park](#), definitely worth a short visit. You can stand at this park, gasp at the statue of the infamous [Donner Party](#) and the depth of the snow in that winter of 1846, and look up in awe at the one last obstacle to their reaching Sutter's Fort in the Sacramento Valley—what appears to be a nearly solid rock wall stretching from the far end of Donner Lake to the top of the 7,239-foot pass.

While you can get back on I-80 and quickly overcome Donner Summit at 65 mph, you can also take the old [Lincoln Highway](#) (old U.S. 40) around the north side of [Donner Lake](#) and slowly climb part of the original route up to the pass.

I-80 generally follows the SP route (I know, it's really the UP now) back down to Sacramento and you should be able to watch trains along the way. Just past Eagle Lakes, exit onto Highway 20 which will get you off of the interstate and down to Nevada City and Highway 49 again. [Nevada City](#) and its sister,

[Grass Valley](#), were once served by the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad via a connection with the SP at Colfax. Nevada City is the more interesting town for wandering and has some interesting NCNG equipment at the Silver Queen Motel. The [Empire Mine](#) in Grass Valley is also very interesting and typical of the large, underground mining operations which superseded the early placer mining.

Highway 49 from Grass Valley eventually leads to Auburn (remember Auburn?) and I-80 which leads back to Sacramento and the Bay Area.

But you say that you still have some time left? Well, at Truckee, you could have stayed on Highway 89 and come back down through Portola so you could visit the [Western Pacific Railroad Museum](#), and then drive through the beautiful [Feather River Canyon](#)—true Union Pacific country. Once back in the Sacramento Valley at Oroville, you could turn north on Highway 99 to Red Bluff and then turn onto Highway 36 to the north coast. Upon reaching Highway 101, the [Redwood Highway](#), you could turn north to [Ferndale](#), a small community of restored Victorians. Then you could head south on Highway 101 through the company town of Scotia (center of the controversy regarding the Headwaters Forest), through [Humbolt Redwoods State Park](#) to Leggit. Then you could turn westerly onto Highway 1 which follows the coast (all the way to Los Angeles actually) to the village of [Mendocino](#). Cutting inland onto Highway 128 eventually gets you to the famous wine country around [Napa](#) and [Sonoma](#).

Well, even if you follow this California Road Trip, you still wouldn't visit all of the places that you have heard about and read about in Northern California. Northern California is a very special place for many of us, with so many places to visit and explore. Remember that California is really large! If you start in Sacramento and set your cruise control on 65 mph on the interstate, you can reach the north shore of Lake Tahoe in less than 2 hours; or return from the wine country in just an hour; and it's over five and a half hours to reach Los Angeles. However, you can also spend a whole day exploring all of the little towns along the Delta by driving from San Jose to Sacramento the long way.

We hope that you can extend your convention visit to California to visit some of the many places that we find special. - *Jack and Jacque Burgess*