

Highway Eats, Wild Cards + Craft Breweries

The best food + beer within striking distance of your fixed anchors

How to Use This Guide

Every spot here is near one of your planned stops. Quick stops are grab-and-go (coffee, pastries, tacos) → 5 min or less off the highway. Hidden gems are sit-down meals worth 30-60 minutes. Organized by day so you can slot them in on the fly.

Day	Zone	Best Quick Stop	Best Hidden Gem
Sun 3/29	SLO / Cambria	Scout Coffee	Linn's (olallieberry pie)
Mon 3/30	SB / Ventura	Bob's Well Bread	La Super-Rica Taqueria
Tue 3/31	HB / Newport	Portola Coffee	Destroyer (Culver City)
Wed 4/1	Oceanside / SD	Vacancy Coffee	Ironside Fish & Oyster
Thu 4/2	San Diego	The Mission	Las Cuatro Milpas
Fri 4/3	San Diego	Madi (brunch)	A L'Ouest (already booked)
Sat 4/4	Ventura / Ojai	Ojai Coffee Roasters	The Dutchess

Day 1: SLO + Cambria

Sunday 3/29 | Oakland → San Simeon

★ TOP PICK

QUICK STOP

Scout Coffee Co.

San Luis Obispo

Detour: 5 min off 101 (Monterey St exit)

NYT-featured, Alton Brown approved. Signature Honey Lavender Latte. Two locations downtown.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Coastal Peaks Coffee

San Luis Obispo

Detour: 5 min off 101

Micro roaster on-site. Loaded bagels, pastries, full sandwich menu. Good for a bigger refuel.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

French Corner Bakery

Cambria

Detour: 2 min off Hwy 1

Authentic French pastries: croissants, tarts, Danish. Espresso. Tiny Parisian cafe energy.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

Linn's Restaurant

Cambria

Detour: 3 min off Hwy 1

Local institution since 1989. Famous olallieberry pie a la mode. Honey wheat pancakes with olallieberry syrup. Full sit-down.

Tip: Get the pie. Non-negotiable.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Robin's

Cambria

Detour: 3 min off Hwy 1

Eclectic global cuisine in a historic residence with gardens. Dog-friendly heated patio. Already on your dinner list.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Jocko's

Nipomo (en route)

Detour: 5 min off 101 at Nipomo exit

Roadside steakhouse dating to the 1800s. Santa Maria-style BBQ, oak-fired tri-tip. Off-highway stop between SLO and Santa Barbara.

Tip: Cash-friendly. Quirky roadside charm.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Day 2: SB + Ventura + Ojai

Monday 3/30 | San Simeon → Newport Beach

★ TOP PICK

QUICK STOP

Bob's Well Bread

Los Alamos (off 101)

Detour: 3 min off 101

Artisan bakery. Fresh pastries, bread, coffee. Fast in-and-out. On the 101 between SLO and SB.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

La Super-Rica Taqueria

Santa Barbara

Detour: 10 min off 101

Iconic taqueria. Chicken suizas, gorditas under \$6. Long lines but moves fast.

Tip: Expect 20-30 min line. Cash recommended. Worth every minute.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Corazon Cocina

Santa Barbara Public Market

Detour: 10 min off 101

Seafood-heavy Mexican. Excellent tostadas, mole chicken tacos. Counter service inside the Public Market.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Beacon Coffee

Ventura

Detour: Direct from 101

Roasts their own beans on-site. Clean highway access with industrial area parking. Fast stop.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Pete's Breakfast House

Ventura

Detour: 10 min off 101

Featured on Diners, Drive-Ins & Dives. High-energy breakfast. Affordable and packed.

Tip: Go early or expect a wait.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Brophy Bros.

Ventura Harbor

Detour: 10 min off 101

Seafood and clam bar with harbor views. Fresh catches, New England chowder. Good lunch stop if driving through.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Days 3-4: OC + Heading to SD

Tue 3/31 → Wed 4/1 | Newport / HB / Oceanside / SD

Orange County

★ **TOP PICK**

QUICK STOP

Portola Coffee Roasters

Costa Mesa

Detour: 10 min off 73

Influential OC roaster. Meticulously sourced single-origin, precision espresso. Specialty coffee destination.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Kean Coffee

Newport Beach

Detour: 10 min off PCH

Master roaster Martin Diedrich. Smallholder farmer-sourced beans. Westcliff Drive.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Mama's On 39

Huntington Beach

Detour: 5 min off PCH

Top breakfast spot in HB. Family favorite. Hearty plates, no-frills execution.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Bandoleros Cafe

Huntington Beach

Detour: 5 min off PCH

Mexican breakfast: Chilaquiles Verde/Rojo with chorizo, Mandos Hash. Cozy and authentic.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

San Diego Arrival

★ **TOP PICK**

QUICK STOP

The Mission

North Park, San Diego

Detour: 15 min from I-5

SD staple for 20+ years. House-made bread, Cinnamon French Toast, Zen Breakfast. Best morning move in your neighborhood.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

★ **TOP PICK**

HIDDEN GEM

Las Cuatro Milpas

Barrio Logan, San Diego

Detour: 10 min from I-5

Operating since 1933. Handmade tortillas, deep-fried rolled tacos. SD legend.

Tip: Cash only. Opens at 8:30 AM, closes when they run out (often by 2 PM).

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Days 5-6: SD Deep Cuts

Thu 4/2 + Fri 4/3 | San Diego exploration days

★ **TOP PICK**

HIDDEN GEM

Madi

North Park

Detour: In your neighborhood

Award-winning, voted Best Brunch in SD. Chef-driven breakfast with playful cocktails. Bright coastal setting.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

South Beach Bar & Grill

Ocean Beach

Detour: 20 min from North Park

World-famous Mahi fish taco since 1992. Lively mix of locals and travelers. Near the pier.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Four Tunas Fish & Bar

Old Town

Detour: 15 min from I-5

Hidden inside Old Town Urban Market. 19 taco options. Smoked tuna ("Bacon of the Sea") with crunchy exterior, smoky center.

Tip: Walk to the back of the market. Worth finding.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Taqueria Revolucion

San Diego

Detour: Near North Park

Mesquite wood imported from Mexico, rotisserie adobada al pastor. Authentic street-level tacos.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Trust

Hillcrest

Detour: 10 min from North Park

Seasonal open-flame cooking. Best Neighborhood Restaurant (Eater SD), Best Service + Best Brunch (SD Magazine). Dinner-worthy.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Tuesday Option: Marina Del Rey

If you visit August + Lauren's boat: drive 45-60 min from HB (I-405 N). Coffee at Alfred Coffee (Boardwalk MDR) or Little Lunch (Australian-style, falafel sandwiches + matcha). Lunch on the water at SALT (marina views, California seafood) or Whiskey Red's (180° waterfront patio). Happy hour: Del Rey Lounge 2-6:30 PM. Then 30 min to Highland Park for Gold Line. Nearby: Abbot Kinney Blvd (Venice) for walking, shops, Salt & Straw ice cream.

Days 7-8: Return Route

Sat 4/4 + Sun 4/5 | SD → Ojai → Oakland

★ TOP PICK

QUICK STOP

Ojai Coffee Roasters

Ojai

Detour: 15 min off 101

Community institution. Expertly roasted fresh blends. 337 E Ojai Ave (main street). Quintessential Ojai start.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

The Dutchess

Ojai

Detour: Main street, walkable

All-day restaurant from Rustic Canyon group. Pastries and congee for breakfast, fried chicken sandwiches at lunch, Burmese-Californian dinner. Extremely comfortable and welcoming. One of the best new restaurants in SoCal.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Rory's Place

Ojai

Detour: Downtown Ojai

Live-fire cooking, raw bar, charcuterie, natural wines. Seasonal produce focus. Upscale casual with a wine-bar feel.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Full Moon Izakaya

Ojai

Detour: Downtown Ojai

Walk-in only Japanese sushi and sake spot hidden behind a tea shop. Intimate, unique, hard to find on purpose.

Tip: No reservations. Behind the tea shop on Ojai Ave.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Nocciola

Ojai

Detour: Downtown Ojai

Upscale Northern Italian in a century-old Craftsman home. Pappardelle with slow-roasted wild boar. Special occasion dinner.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Sando's Deli

Shell Beach (en route home)

Detour: 5 min off 101

Hidden gem sandwiches. Pack one for a scenic picnic on the Shell Beach bluffs. Quick stop on 101.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Burritos + Taquerias

The taco trail runs parallel to your route. These are the ones worth pulling over for.

Central Coast (Day 1)

★ TOP PICK

QUICK STOP

Taqueria Santa Cruz Express

San Luis Obispo

Detour: 5 min off 101

Counter-serve with garage-door windows opening to patio seating. Homemade salsa bar. Massive burritos, excellent al pastor tacos.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Tortilla Town

Paso Robles

Detour: 2 min off 101

Handmade tortillas. Al pastor, carnitas, chile verde, carne asada. Right off 101/46. Fast, legit, cheap.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

La Reyna Market

Paso Robles

Detour: 1 block off Spring St

Bustling market with a bomb taqueria inside. Taco Tuesday deals — soft corn tortillas, cilantro, onions, asada, al pastor, birria. Easy parking.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Orange County (Days 2-3)

★ **TOP PICK**

QUICK STOP

Sancho's Tacos

Newport Beach / HB

Detour: Walkable from Lido House

Locations in both Newport and HB. Sawed Off Burrito: eggs, skillet potatoes, cheddar-jack, applewood smoked bacon. Surf-shop energy.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Tacos Los Cholos

Huntington Beach

Detour: 5 min off PCH

Won LA Taco's Taco Madness. The Arrachera Taco is the must-try — rich, smoky, perfectly charred.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Dory Deli

Newport Beach Boardwalk

Detour: On the boardwalk

Boardwalk Burrito: scrambled eggs, crispy hash browns, bacon, avocado, white cheddar. Morning walk fuel.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

San Diego (Days 4-6)

SD is a top-3 taco city in America. Barrio Logan and North Park are ground zero.

★ **TOP PICK**

HIDDEN GEM

Las Cuatro Milpas

Barrio Logan

Detour: 10 min from North Park

Operating since 1933. Handmade tortillas pressed in front of you. Rolled tacos, tamales, rice and beans. SD institution. Already in your food guide — go twice.

Tip: Cash only. Opens 8:30 AM, closes when they run out (often by 2 PM).

→ [Apple Maps](#)

★ TOP PICK

QUICK STOP

Lolita's Mexican Food

Barrio Logan / Multiple

Detour: Multiple locations

Voted best Mexican in SD for years running. The California Burrito (carne asada, fries, cheese, guac) is the benchmark. 6 locations.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

City Tacos

North Park

Detour: Walkable in your neighborhood

Loyal following. Unique combos: mahi-mahi with strawberries, Mexicali (skirt steak, mashed potato, poblano, crema, cotija). Creative but authentic.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Taqueria Revolucion

San Diego

Detour: Near North Park

Mesquite wood imported from Mexico, rotisserie adobada al pastor. Street-level tacos done exactly right.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Cocina de Barrio

North Park

Detour: In your neighborhood

Oaxacan cuisine with a modern twist. Mole negro, heirloom corn tortillas, chapulines (grasshoppers). For adventurous eaters.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Ojai + Ventura (Day 7)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

Ojai Tortilla House

Ojai

Detour: Downtown Ojai

Fresh handmade flour and corn tortillas daily. Oversized burritos are the claim to fame — especially the veggie. 104 N Signal St.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

The Farmer and the Cook

Ojai

Detour: Meiners Oaks, 5 min from downtown

Organic farm-stand meets taqueria. Fresh burritos and tacos with ingredients from their own farm. Quintessential Ojai.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Craft Breweries

Colin's picks along the route. Craft beer capital of America runs right through your trip.

Central Coast (Day 1)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

Firestone Walker Brewing Co.

Paso Robles

Detour: 5 min off 101

The icon. Tour the facility, eat at The Taproom. 805 Blonde Ale named after the area code. Annual Anniversary Ale is legendary barrel-aged blend.

Tip: Order: 805, Luponie Distortion, any Anniversary vintage.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

BarrelHouse Brewing Co.

Paso Robles

Detour: 5 min off 101

Largest family-owned craft brewery in SLO county. Half-acre beer garden, on-site food truck (Smash N Roll), amphitheater.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

QUICK STOP

Central Coast Brewing

San Luis Obispo

Detour: 5 min off 101

'The HUB' downtown — craft beer meets food trucks, steps from Cal Poly. 25+ years brewing.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

Orange County (Days 2-3)

HIDDEN GEM

Helmsman Ale House

Newport Beach

Detour: In your neighborhood

Newport's only craft brewery. Near the harbor. Hazy IPA with tropical citrus notes, Honey Blonde. Walkable from Lido House.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Green Cheek Beer Co.

Orange

Detour: 15 min from Newport

Vibrant spot with turf patio. Great IPAs and sours. Trivia nights, Paint & Pints.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Bottle Logic Brewing

Anaheim

Detour: 15 min from Newport

World-class stouts and barrel-aged beers. Darkstar November is legendary.

Tip: Order: Darkstar November (if available), Hanamachi.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

San Diego (Days 4-6)

150+ breweries. North Park's 30th St has more craft beer per mile than anywhere in America. Walk it.

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

Pure Project

North Park / Miramar

Detour: In your neighborhood

Sustainably sourced, incredible IPAs and hazys. North Park taproom on El Cajon Blvd is the vibe.

Tip: Order: Nelson Rye IPA, Murklunds Hazy.

[→ Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

North Park Beer Co.

North Park

Detour: Walkable from Pure Project

Neighborhood namesake brewery hitting full stride. Phenomenal beers, great taproom.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Thorn St. Brewery

North Park

Detour: Walkable from Pure Project

Great neighborhood vibe, dog-friendly, food truck collabs. Indoor + outdoor.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

AleSmith Brewing

Miramar

Detour: 15 min from North Park

Ranked #6 brewery in the world. Speedway Stout is a bucket list beer. Massive tasting room.

Tip: Order: Speedway Stout, .394 Pale Ale.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Stone Brewing

Liberty Station

Detour: 10 min from North Park

The OG. 9th biggest brewing company in the US. Liberty Station gardens are stunning.

Tip: Order: Enjoy By IPA (freshest you'll ever get).

→ [Apple Maps](#)

Ojai + Ventura (Day 7)

★ TOP PICK

HIDDEN GEM

Ojai Valley Brewery

Ojai

Detour: Downtown Ojai

Terroir-driven beers infused with valley flavors. Large outdoor patio with games + pool table. Dog-friendly. 307 Bryant St.

→ [Apple Maps](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Topa Topa Brewing Co.

Ojai + Ventura

Detour: Downtown Ojai

New Ojai tap room with great views. One of the best on the central coast. Chief Peak IPA is the move.

→ [Apple Maps](#)
