

SoCal Road Trip Planner

Colin + Nicole | March 29 - April 5, 2026

Trip Dates	Sunday, March 29 - Saturday, April 5, 2026
Vehicle	2020 Toyota RAV4 (~27 mpg highway)
Route	Oakland → San Simeon → Newport Beach → San Diego → Ojai → Oakland
Nights	7 nights: Cavalier Inn, Lido House (2), Sarah + Jason's SD (3), Capri Hotel Ojai
Key Events	Padres vs Giants Wed 4/1 1:10 PM A L'Ouest Fri 4/3 6:15 PM

Quick Itinerary

Day	Route	Drive	Stay
Sun 3/29	Oakland → San Simeon	3.5 hrs	Cavalier Oceanfront Resort
Mon 3/30	San Simeon → Newport Beach	4.5-5.5 hrs	Lido House (2 nights)
Tue 3/31	Split: Nicole HB / Colin LA option	Local / 45 min	Lido House
Wed 4/1	Newport → San Diego	1.5 hrs	Sarah + Jason's (4374 39th St)
Thu 4/2	San Diego explore	Local	Sarah + Jason's
Fri 4/3	SD explore + A L'Ouest 6:15	Local	Sarah + Jason's
Sat 4/4	San Diego → Ojai	4 hrs	Capri Hotel, Ojai
Sun 4/5	Ojai → Oakland	5.5 hrs	Home

Day 1: Oakland to San Simeon

Sunday, March 29

Drive

Oakland to San Simeon, 3.5 hours via US-101 and CA-46 West

Stay

Cavalier Oceanfront Resort | 9415 Hearst Dr, San Simeon | (805) 927-4688

Oceanfront rooms. Watch the waves from bed.

Do

- Boo Boo Records, SLO (978 Monterey St) → lunch stop + crate digging. Best record store on the 101.
- Elephant Seal Rookery → free viewing, March = molting season
- Hearst Castle → tours from \$30, Grand Rooms tour recommended
- Moonstone Beach → boardwalk + moonstone hunting, Cambria
- Hearst Ranch Winery → tasting at Sebastian's General Store

Eat

- Firestone Grill, SLO → tri-tip sandwich (near Boo Boo Records)
- Robin's, Cambria → eclectic global, garden setting
- Linn's, Cambria → famous olallieberry pie

Notes

Depart Oakland ~9 AM. Lunch stop in SLO around noon (Boo Boo's + Firestone). Arrive San Simeon mid-afternoon. Seals, sunset, dinner.

Day 2: San Simeon to Newport Beach

Monday, March 30

Drive

- Option A (Inland): 4.5 hrs via US-101 → I-5 → CA-73
- Option B (Big Sur): 5.5 hrs via CA-1 coastal route (stunning but slow)
- Option C: Ojai detour adds ~1 hr from inland route

Stay

Lido House | 3300 Newport Blvd, Newport Beach | (949) 524-8500

Boutique Marriott Autograph. Topside rooftop bar, saltwater pool, free bikes, Lido Limo shuttle.

2-night stay (Mon + Tue).

Do

- Lido Marina Village → walkable from hotel, shops, galleries
- Optional Ojai detour: Bart's Books, wine tasting, Pink Moment sunset

Eat

- Marche Moderne → modern French, South Coast Plaza (your JouJou / Pomet equivalent)
- Lido House rooftop → Topside bar for sunset drinks

Notes

Choose route based on energy. Big Sur is spectacular but adds an hour. Settle into Lido House for two-night stay. Explore Newport evening.

Day 3: Split Day

Tuesday, March 31 | Nicole → HB | Colin → Deb's house + OC/LA

Drive

Local day. Nicole: Huntington Beach (sister's haircut). Colin: visit Deb's new construction house (OC area), then records/food.

Stay

Lido House (Newport Beach) → second night

Do

- **Visit Deb's new construction house** → OC area (address TBD). Morning or early afternoon.
- **Colin Option A (Stay Local):** Dr. Freecloud's Records (100K+ vinyl, Fountain Valley) + Blind Dog HiFi (listening rooms, Costa Mesa) + Port of Sound + Factory Records
- **Colin Option B (Culver City):** Visit friends, then: Destroyer (Jordan Kahn, Nordic lunch, 3578 Hayden Ave, 8am-3pm) → Record Surplus (50K+ used, West LA) → Gold Line bar (Stones Throw Records, Highland Park, opens 5pm)
- **Colin Option C (Marina Del Rey):** Visit August + Lauren at their boat. Marina Del Rey is 40 min from Newport.
- Nicole: HB with sister, Crystal Cove, Balboa Island Ferry

Eat

- Bear Flag Fish Co → counter seafood, Newport (alaMar equivalent)
- Brodard Chateau → Vietnamese, Fountain Valley (legendary spring rolls)
- Destroyer, Culver City → if doing LA option (closes 3pm)

Notes

Visit Deb's house AM/early PM, then records + food. Regroup with Nicole for dinner. Brodard Chateau or Newport spot.

Day 4: Newport to San Diego

Wednesday, April 1 | Padres vs Giants 1:10 PM

Drive

- Newport Beach to San Diego: 1.5 hrs via I-5
- Must leave Newport by 10:30 AM to make game time
- Optional Sound by the Sea stop in Oceanside (on the way, opens 5pm Wed)

Stay

Sarah + Jason's | 4374 39th St, San Diego

Staying with friends. 3 nights (Wed-Fri).

Do

- **Padres vs Giants at Petco Park, 1:10 PM** → 100 Park Blvd, San Diego | **Section 221, Row 4, Seats 5-8** (Renew Platinum, via Elizabeth Johnson)
- Parking: East Village lots ~\$30, or Old Town + Green Line trolley
- Post-game: explore Gaslamp Quarter or Little Italy

Eat

- Petco Park food: Hodad's burgers (Section 100), Seaside Market tri-tip, Puesto tacos
- Post-game: Ironside Fish & Oyster (Little Italy) → you know this one
- City Tacos (North Park) → you know this one

Notes

Tight timeline for 1:10 PM first pitch. Leave Newport early. Sound by the Sea opens at 5pm Wed → could stop on the way if timing works.

Day 5: San Diego Explore

Thursday, April 2 | Tribute Pizza + North Park

Drive

Local San Diego → no major driving

Stay

Sarah + Jason's | 4374 39th St, San Diego

Do

- Balboa Park → 1,200 acres, free gardens, architecture, museums
- Sunset Cliffs → dramatic sea cliffs, tide pools, golden hour
- Folk Arts Rare Records → North Park, one of CA's oldest shops
- Convoy District → SD's Chinatown (Dumpling Inn, Zab Siam, Woomiok)

Eat

- **Tribute Pizza** → 3077 North Park Way, Neo-Neapolitan, Thu 4-8 PM (your June's Pizza)
- Convoy District lunch → your Shandong / Great China playground
- Awash Ethiopian, City Heights → your Selam / Shewhat equivalent

Drink

- Mabel's Gone Fishing → natural wine + oysters, North Park (your Snail Bar)
- **Part Time Lover** → listening bar, Klipschorns + McIntosh tubes + Condesa rotary. Walk-in only, no requests. Post-dinner nightcap.

Notes

Big San Diego day. Balboa AM → Convoy lunch → Folk Arts crate dig → Tribute Pizza dinner → Part Time Lover nightcap.

Day 6: La Jolla + A L'Ouest

Friday, April 3 | Reservation at 6:15 PM

Drive

Local San Diego → La Jolla is 25 min north

Stay

Sarah + Jason's | 4374 39th St, San Diego (last night)

Do

- Torrey Pines Reserve → best coastal hike in SoCal, 1-2 hrs (your Sibley Volcanic)
- La Jolla Cove → sea lions, kayaking, snorkeling
- Chicano Park → incredible murals under Coronado Bridge

- Longplay HiFi → afternoon listening session (McIntosh + Klipsch, Logan Heights)
- Vinyl Junkies → South Park, Digger's Den in back (\$3-5 bins)

Eat

- **A L'Ouest** → **6:15 PM reservation** | 3002 University Ave, North Park | French brasserie, live-fire cooking, Chef Brad Wise

Drink

- Kiku Room → Little Italy, dark disco, late night (if energy allows)
- The Rose Wine Bar → South Park, natural wine only

Notes

Torrey Pines morning hike → La Jolla lunch → Longplay + Vinyl Junkies afternoon → A L'Ouest 6:15 PM.

Day 7: San Diego to Ojai

Saturday, April 4

Drive

- San Diego to Ojai: ~4 hrs via I-5 North → US-101 → CA-33
- Encinitas stop → lunch/beer with Phil (right on I-5, 30 min north of SD)
- Optional Sound by the Sea stop in Oceanside (Sat sessions start 1pm)
- Grady's Record Refuge in Ventura (noon, on the way)

Stay

The Capri Hotel | 1180 E Ojai Ave, Ojai | (805) 646-4305

Boutique, design-forward. Great pool. One night.

Do

- **Encinitas:** Lunch/beer with Phil → stop on the way out of SD, right on I-5
- Sound by the Sea, Oceanside → Sat 1pm session (if missed Wed)
- Grady's Record Refuge, Ventura → used vinyl + turntable repairs, opens noon
- Meditation Mount → Pink Moment sunset viewpoint (free)
- Bart's Books → world's largest outdoor bookstore

Eat

- Encinitas lunch with Phil → Fish 101 (fish tacos) or Haggo's Organic Taco
- The Rochers → French restaurant, Ojai dinner
- Olivella → Ojai Valley Inn, Italian, olive tree patio
- Ojai Rotie → Mediterranean, wine bar atmosphere

Drink

- Casa Barranca → winery tasting room, downtown Ojai
- Naturalist Wines → natural wine bar, arcade building
- The Hub / The Hut → Ojai dive bars

Notes

Depart SD by 9 AM. Encinitas with Phil → Oceanside stop → Ventura record shop → Capri Hotel by 3-4 PM. Pool. Pink Moment sunset. Dinner.

Day 8: Ojai to Oakland

Sunday, April 5

Drive

Ojai to Oakland: ~5.5 hrs via US-101 → I-5 North

Stay

Home

Do

- Bart's Books morning browse (if missed Saturday)
- Ojai Olive Oil Company → tasting, gifts

Eat

- Pinyon → breakfast/brunch, Ojai (creative seasonal menu)
- Highway coffee: Equator Coffee (SLO area), Blue Bottle (if passing through LA)

Notes

Hit the road by 10 AM. Home by 4 PM. Easy drive up the 101 → I-5.

Mexico Options

Optional day trip or overnight from San Diego | Best on Thu 4/2 or Fri 4/3

Option A: Tijuana Food Tour

Walk across at San Ysidro border crossing. Guided street food tours available (Wild Foodie Tours, Baja Test Kitchen). Top stops: Birria Si, Mariscos El Mazateno, craft beer at Border Psycho / Insurgente.

Option B: Valle de Guadalupe Wine Country

Mexico's Napa, 1.5-2 hrs south of SD. Boutique wineries + farm-to-table dining. Top restaurants: FAUNA (Chef David Castro), Finca Altozano (open fire), Deckman's (greenhouse). Overnight: Bruma (design cabins), Encuentro Guadalupe.

Option C: Ensenada

1.5 hrs past TJ. Seafood street tacos, La Bufadora blowhole, Hussong's Cantina (oldest bar in Baja, since 1892).

Mexico Logistics

- Valid passport required
- Mexican auto insurance: \$15-25/day (purchase online before crossing)
- Drive time: SD → TJ border: 25 min | SD → Valle: 2 hrs | SD → Ensenada: 2.5 hrs

Trip Logistics

Accommodations Summary

Night(s)	Where	Address / Contact
Sun 3/29	Cavalier Oceanfront Resort	9415 Hearst Dr, San Simeon (805) 927-4688
Mon-Tue 3/30-3/31	Lido House	3300 Newport Blvd, Newport Beach (949) 524-8500
Wed-Fri 4/1-4/3	Sarah + Jason's	4374 39th St, San Diego
Sat 4/4	The Capri Hotel	1180 E Ojai Ave, Ojai (805) 646-4305

Key Reservations

- **A L'Ouest:** Fri 4/3, 6:15 PM | 3002 University Ave, North Park | (619) 257-0045
- **Sound by the Sea:** Reserve via Tock | 325 S Coast Hwy, Oceanside | (760) 547-5441
- **Padres vs Giants:** Wed 4/1, 1:10 PM | Petco Park | Section 221, Row 4, Seats 5-8 (Renew Platinum)

Gas + Vehicle

2020 RAV4: ~27 mpg highway. Estimate 900-1,000 miles round trip. Budget \$110-130 for fuel. Fill up in SLO (Day 1), before SD (Day 4), and before Ojai (Day 7).

Weather + Packing

Late March/early April: 60-75F days, 50-60F nights. Coastal fog possible. Pack light layers, light jacket, sunscreen, walking shoes, swimsuit.

Parking Notes

- San Simeon: Free at beaches and attractions. Hotel has guest parking.
- Newport Beach: Street parking free in many areas. Lido House provides parking.
- San Diego: East Village lots ~\$30/day. Old Town + Green Line trolley alternative.
- Ojai: Free street parking downtown.

