

— *Glorious Coastal* —

# • GETAWAYS •

A rugged stretch of shoreline teeming with wildlife and artisanal eats. A laid-back hipster haven drawing surfers and beer enthusiasts. A luxe storybook village mixing natural beauty with a thriving arts scene. Let *Diablo* guide you to the nearby seaside escape that best suits your vibe.



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# POINT REYES

*A Walk on the Wild Side*



**OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS WILL DISCOVER MORE THAN JUST COASTAL VIEWS IN THIS LAID-BACK SLICE OF WEST MARIN.** BY DANA REBMANN

## IT'S WITH THE FIRST COW SIGHTING THAT YOU REALIZE YOU'RE GETTING CLOSE.

Things, including the speed limit, seem to slow down as you make your way right into the middle of, well, nature. According to the National Park Service, 2.4 million people visit Point Reyes National Seashore every year. It's easy to understand the park's seemingly magnetic attraction. About a 90-minute drive from the East Bay, it feels like you've traveled a world away, but your odometer proves otherwise.

Your first stop should be the Bear Valley Visitor Center; enthusiastic rangers will help you make the best of your time in the area, and there are a number of trails nearby. At the very least, you'll want to grab a map; chances are good you're going to need it. Cell service in these parts is iffy at best. Embrace it and disconnect. Enjoy the peace and quiet. Get lost, and remember how much fun it can be to correctly fold up a paper map. [visitmarin.org](http://visitmarin.org).

### ANIMAL INSTINCTS

Due to reopen this fall, the Point Reyes Lighthouse and Visitor Center will soon shine brighter than ever, thanks to a \$5 million, year-long restoration. Dating to 1870, the 35-foot-tall, 16-sided tower is the area's most-visited site and a great spot for whale watching.

Sheltered by sandstone cliffs, Drakes Beach has long been a favorite with visitors, but after the 2018 government shutdown, it rose to new levels of fame. With park rangers locked out, a colony of elephant seals moved in, taking over the empty stretch of coastline. As you make your way to and from the beach, keep a lookout for Tule elk. Although the bulk of the herd lives in the reserve to the north, they can make appearances here, too. Hunted nearly to extinction in the 1800s, Tule elk were reintroduced in 1978. Today, some 450 are said to roam freely.

Its long stretch of soft sand makes Limantour Beach ideal for exploring. Keep your eyes open for harbor seals in the waves. The trail from the parking lot to the beach comes with a bonus view of the surrounding wetlands, especially popular with shorebirds in the fall. Leashed dogs are allowed on the southeast end of the beach. Bathrooms and picnic tables are located near the parking lot. [nps.gov/pore](http://nps.gov/pore).

### A LOCAVORE HAVEN

There are a handful of shops, markets, and restaurants scattered throughout Inverness, Inverness Park, and Olema, but the small town of Point Reyes Station rises to the top as the food and shopping hot spot. Expect a line at Bovine Bakery, a go-to for in-the-know visitors to pick up strong organic coffee and



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: TANVEER BADAL; LACEY BEDIZ; DENNIS ANDERSON; DEBORAH J. ALBRE; COURTESY OF DUE WEST RESTAURANT

handmade pastries before hitting the trails or the beach. Osteria Stellina proudly touts the fact that 95 percent of its ever-changing menu is sourced from West Marin. In addition to Tomales Bay oysters, Stellina has offerings like Double 8 water buffalo ricotta and pizza with roasted oyster mushrooms, onion, and truffle oil. [bovinebakery.ptreyes.com](http://bovinebakery.ptreyes.com), [osteriastellina.com](http://osteriastellina.com).

Just five minutes down the road, you'll find Due West restaurant, which focuses on West Marin ingredients. It's tough to go wrong with the Adult Grilled Cheese made with locally baked Brickmaiden Bread and served with roasted tomato bisque. Clemente Garden at Due West is a popular hangout, and it's not unheard of for locals to arrive for a "night on the town" on horseback. If the idea inspires you to saddle up, Five Brooks Ranch offers trail rides for city slickers of all abilities. [olemahouse.com/dine](http://olemahouse.com/dine), [fivebrooks.com](http://fivebrooks.com).

#### ARTISANAL EDUCATION

It's easy to lose track of time in these parts, but you don't want to be late for the Cheese 101 Class at Cowgirl Creamery. "Good milk makes good cheese," says cheese educator Cheryl Dobbins. "The

more complex [the cows'] diet, the more flavorful your cheese is going to be."

The tabletop curd demonstration simplifies the science behind cheese-making, then rewards students with tastings of some of Cowgirl Creamery's most popular selections. Classes are offered on Fridays, and reservations are a must. If you don't get a spot, it's worth checking back; they try to squeeze folks in whenever possible. [cowgirlcreamery.com](http://cowgirlcreamery.com).

Less than a mile north of Point Reyes Station on Highway 1, Heidrun Meadery crafts sparkling meads—wines made from honey instead of grapes, using the traditional French Méthode Champenoise. The flowers from which bees collect their nectar determine the honey and, ultimately, the mead's flavor. Even if you don't have time for a tour, it's worth buzzing in for a tasting. [heidrunmeadery.com](http://heidrunmeadery.com).

## WHERE TO STAY

### ► FOR ALFRESCO ADVENTURES

Point Reyes National Seashore offers four hike-in backcountry campgrounds; permits and walk-in reservations are often available at Bear Valley Visitor Center, but advance reservations are suggested. (There is no car camping within the National Seashore; sites may only be accessed by hiking, biking, or horseback.) Samuel P. Taylor State Park has car and RV camping, along with cabins, too. [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov), [parks.ca.gov/469](http://parks.ca.gov/469).

### ► FOR CREATURE COMFORTS

After spending your days immersed in nature, sometimes a night in a cushy bed is the way to go. Located on four acres just off of Highway 1, Olema House has two dozen guest rooms, including an apartment and two cottages. Each accommodation is a bit different, but there's a cozy, seashore-lodge feel throughout. All rooms look out toward Point Reyes National Seashore park, with views of Olema Creek. The expansive back lawn invites relaxation with Adirondack chairs and a fire pit, making it easy to linger and take it all in. [olemahouse.com](http://olemahouse.com).

