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The 10 Best Hotels In Santa Barbara

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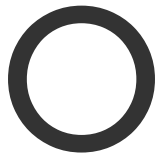
The best hotels in Santa Barbara, known of its Mediterranean climate and Spanish Colonial architectu... [+] GETTY

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ften referred to as the American Riviera, Santa Barbara does recall Europe's most chi-chi coastline with its whitewashed Spanish Colonial buildings draped in bougainvillea, blue waters and balmy temperatures. But while the playground of Hollywood A-listers has a certain gilded era glamour, it isn't stuck in the past. Santa Barbara's Funk Zone—where industrial buildings have been renovated and filled with winery tasting rooms, breweries and artsy boutiques—is hip and fun. And the art scene is on par with a big city. The Santa Barbara Museum of Art reopened in 2021 following a six-year-long renovation—the collection includes everything from Pre-Colombian antiquities to contemporary art—and the MOXI is a science, technology and art museum specializing in interactive exhibits.

Over the last five years, chic hotel companies like Rosewood and Palisociety have opened properties in Santa Barbara, and hotels like the famed San Ysidro Ranch did a nearly complete rebuild following a mudslide in 2018. The best hotels in Santa Barbara embrace their surroundings while also offering a fresh take on California coastal

living, such as a preppy boutique hotel in the Presidio District and a lavish mansion-style resort in Montecito. Here are the hotels that need to be on your radar.

- **Best Hotel in Santa Barbara Overall:**
[Hotel Californian](#)
- **Best Beachfront Hotel in Santa Barbara:** [Rosewood Miramar Beach](#)
- **Best Luxury Hotel in Santa Barbara:**
[The Ritz-Carlton Bacara, Santa Barbara](#)
- **Best Hotel For Couples in Santa Barbara:** [San Ysidro Ranch](#)
- **Best Boutique Hotel in Santa Barbara:** [Palihouse Santa Barbara](#)
- **Best Hotel For Families in Santa Barbara:** [Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort](#)
- **Best Hotel Rooftop in Santa Barbara:**
[Kimpton Canary Hotel](#)
- **Best Hotel For Wellness in Santa Barbara:** [El Encanto, A Belmond Hotel](#)
- **Hotel With the Best Amenities in Santa Barbara:** [Drift Santa Barbara](#)
- **Best Value Hotel in Santa Barbara:**
[Montecito Inn](#)

Best Hotel in Santa Barbara Overall: Hotel Californian



Hotel Californian's Moorish interiors are unexpected and modern. COURTESY HOTEL CALIFORNIAN/VISIT SANTA BARBARA

Hotel Californian

Reserve At
[Booking.com](https://www.booking.com)

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Who Will Love It:

Sophisticated travelers who want to be able to walk to everything

All-Star Amenities: Custom Hotel Californian bicycles; fitness center; turndown service; minibars featuring

local spirits and small-
batch mixers

What Not To Miss: A
winemaker dinner at
Blackbird

Location: Funk Zone

Santa Barbara's grand Hotel Californian has endured for nearly a century—the Spanish Colonial Revival hotel was built in 1925—but a makeover in 2017 gave it a thoroughly modern look. Moroccan interiors by designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard are contemporary yet glamorous. The hotel features more than one million tiles—many hand painted in Morocco—on floors and walls and custom furnishings in jewel tones like sapphire blue and deep emerald.

The central location is hard to top. The hotel is at the lively Funk Zone neighborhood's front door, and hotel guests can walk to wine tasting rooms, boutiques and restaurants. Guests won't be disappointed with the on property offerings either, including the upscale Blackbird restaurant and lounge and the Moroccan-inspired library bar Djinn. The Hotel Californian is just a block from the train station and a seven-minute walk to Stearns Wharf. While the hotel isn't right on the water, guests get a prime view of the sea from the rooftop swimming pool. The design of Spa Majorelle is inspired by the soothing shade of blue found in traditional Marrakech doorways and treatments like facials and massages are customized.