

Cannery Row

Top 10 Family Fun Getaways

#1. Family Memory Maker

Has it been too long since you've had some? Cannery Row offers families a getaway with maximum fun and zero driving. The spacious rooms at the Victorian Inn include complimentary breakfast served in the Parlor and in-room coffeemakers (yes, you will have that first cup of the day within minutes of opening your eyes). Easy walking distance to everything on Cannery Row, including Cannery Row Pizzeria for a casual meal. Head upstairs and visit Hello Kitty for a playful souvenir. "Family" and "fun" live again in the same experience!

#2. Carefree and Car-Free with the Kids

Can you say Otter Inn? This relaxed Cannery Row hotel offers families a chance to park the car and resoundingly answer "Yes!" to the question: Are we there yet? Because everything you want to do is within walking distance. Complimentary breakfast starts the day, which includes a short walk to the Steinbeck's Spirit of Monterey Wax Museum. On the way you can point out the bust of Ed "Doc" Ricketts, John Steinbeck's marine biologist friend, located in the spot where he was killed when his car was hit by a train in 1948 (the macabre musings will keep the kids occupied for a good 10 minutes). The Museum is a fun way to learn about the history of Monterey and Cannery Row. Dinner at El Torito can mean sizzling enchiladas, nachos, and the little amigo's favorite off their great kids menu. The next day take a walk along McAbee Beach and look for seashells. Don't worry if you don't find enough, Sand Dollar Gifts has shells and coral that children love as souvenirs.

#3. Fancy Fun for Little VIPs

Teaching children to enjoy first class hotels may come back to haunt you, but it can make a family getaway a treat for mom and dad as well. The Monterey Bay Inn has oversized guestrooms with sleeper sofas that comfortably accommodate a small family. A delicious complimentary breakfast is delivered to your room in the morning, so mom and dad can take breakfast out onto the patio for a little private time while the kids watch TV and eat. A walk down Cannery Row involves checking out the color-change t-shirts, sunglasses and nail polish at Del Sol (sunlight activates the color change) on the way to McAbee Beach, where the whole family can wade in and then be back up on the street in minutes. Hot fudge sundaes at Ghirardelli Ice Cream & Chocolate Shop are not only delicious but a lot of fun. Rent a canopied surrey and bike down the Recreation Trail before you head up to Louie Linguini's for great seafood, pasta and pizza in this casual seafood shack.

#4. Teen-Friendly Touring

Travel with teens can be equal parts misery and frustration. So choose a hotel that offers plenty of room to spread out and lovely large ocean view terraces where they can sit with iPods and cell phones for hours. The Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa fits the bill. The rooms are spacious, and there are two great restaurants for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Within one block in either direction are smaller, safe beaches, and kayaks can be rented across the street-with or without a guide. The Monterey Bay Aquarium is a family favorite for kids of all ages, and teens can be here safely for hours. The young, hip staff at Bubba Gump's makes this energetic movie-themed restaurant great fun for teens, and the food is a style that the whole family will like. Send them off without worry to the Candy Factory to load up on salt-water taffy and foot-long pizie stix, or to The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory for caramel apples and fudge.

#5. Natural Family Fun

Families find the Monterey Bay at once educational and enchanting, so pack up the kids and head to the coast for a few days of awe-inspiring action. InterContinental The Clement Monterey is an ideal home base, with ocean view rooms, outdoor terraces and a kids lounge with climbing wall and games. After you check in, make your first stop the Cannery Row IMAX Theatre. Here, just one block from the hotel, you'll don 3-D glasses and view fascinating films that capture the magic of the deep blue sea. Marvel at prehistoric sea monsters or sharks off the coast of South Africa, before heading back outside and walking a couple of blocks to Bay Bikes. Rent a four-wheeled surrey and trace the Coastal Recreation Trail, stopping off to photograph sea otters along the way. When the adventure leaves you all a little hungry, refuel at The Fish Hopper. This kid-friendly restaurant boasts ocean views from every table, fresh seafood for Mom and Dad and a children's menu packed with favorites such as pasta and meatballs, grilled cheese and chicken strips.

#6. Steinbeck for the Family

Literature comes alive on Cannery Row, where Steinbeck himself once spent time. Before you book your stay at the convenient, affordable Otter Inn, pick up a few paperback copies of Cannery Row so you and the kids can hit the ground running. Then, head out on a story-based scavenger hunt. Search for Doc Ricketts' lab and the bronze monument that honors the real-life Ed Ricketts. Take pictures outside the Wing Chong Market building, the model for Lee Chong's Grocery. Peek inside three workers' cottages that date back to the city's sardine packing days, and wind along the recreation trail where signage spotlights local history and the activities of Mac and the boys. Learn more about the sardine industry inside the Monterey Bay Aquarium, where exhibits explain how the canneries worked, and talk about all you've seen over dinner at The Fish Hopper. Before heading home, paint your Monterey memories onto pottery at Synchronicity Studio in the American Tin Cannery.

#7. 'Tween Travel

When the kids are too old for the playground but too young for the art exhibits, what's a parent to do? The answers are found on Cannery Row. With an assortment of family-friendly activities that please children of all ages (as well as Mom and Dad!), planning a summer vacation has never been so easy. For starters, there's the Cannery Row IMAX Theatre, which screens an array of films featuring everything from sea creatures and underwater wonder to top commercial movies and pop concerts. From there, grab a gelato at the Edgewater Café and head out for a little shopping. Lids carries the coolest hats and baseball caps, two Sockshop locations are a hit among trendy young ladies and Sharky's Shirts has Cannery Row t-shirts for everyone. To satisfy budding young artists, stop by Synchronicity Studio for a fun afternoon of painting pottery, and then reminisce about all the adventures over burgers at Woody's Bayview Grill. As you head back to your bay-view room at the Monterey Bay Inn, stop off for sweet frosted cookies at the Nestle Toll House Café at the new InterContinental The Clement Monterey.

#8. Spontaneous Together Time

Why spend hours planning a vacation? For simple, spectacular family travel, book a room at InterContinental The Clement Monterey and everyone will be happy. Little ones love the kids lounge, with craft projects, video games and a climbing wall. Teens enjoy the outdoor heated pool, on-site Nestle Toll House Café and views of the Monterey Bay. Parents feel spoiled by the inn's spa and fitness facilities, fine dining at The C Restaurant, valet parking and lavish guest amenities. And, everyone appreciates the hotel's ease. Set in the center of Cannery Row, it's an easy walk to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, bike, surrey and kayak rentals at Bay Bikes and Adventures by the Sea, Ocean's 18 Miniature Golf and several scenic beaches. For special treats, snack on cinnamon rolls at Lillie Mae's or sit down to lunch overlooking the water at C restaurant + bar.

#9. The Joys of Childhood

Where else can kids pet sea stars, tackle an indoor climbing wall, stroll through one of Steinbeck's novels and snack on fresh chocolate chip cookies? Cannery Row provides all the enchantment a kid could hope for, with the convenience and class that parents demand. The Monterey Bay Aquarium, with a walk-through wave crash, touch pools, furry sea otters and playful penguins, is a family favorite. Nearby, scenes from Cannery Row come to life at John Steinbeck's Spirit of Monterey Wax Museum. For a glimpse of the future, let the kids peek into the crystal ball at Mrs. Laurie's Palm and Card Reading; for more mystique, Zucchini's Tricks N' Things is packed with tricks and treats for budding wizards. At InterContinental The Clement Monterey, children can hang out at the kids club, with its climbing wall, gaming systems and craft projects, while Mom and Dad enjoy a massage at The Energia Spa. The hotel also is home to the Nestle Toll House Café - yum! - and Rip Squeak and Friends Gallery's whimsical paintings and children's books. Little ones love walking out on the hotel's pier, where floor cutouts provide a peek at the Monterey Bay below.

#10. Active Family Outings

Cannery Row's activities and attractions are ideal for kids with energy to burn. Gather shells and peek at teeming tidepools on McAbee and San Carlos Beaches, and then check out bikes and roll along the Coastal Recreation Trail. Schedule a family putt-off on the marine-themed holes at Oceans 18 Miniature Golf, followed by classic burgers and thick shakes at Archie's American Diner. If exploring the Monterey Bay Aquarium or painting pottery at Synchronicity Studio, leave little ones eager for more, and set them up at the kids club at InterContinental The Clement Monterey. A climbing wall and gaming systems keep children busy for hours, and Mom and Dad appreciate the opportunity to relax with a glass of wine on The C Restaurant's outdoor terrace. With cozy, contemporary rooms, enticing amenities and a prime Cannery Row location, the hotel is the perfect fit for families on the go.