

Stunning Hikes Near Santa Cruz, California

by Carissa Stanz Updated January 23, 2022



The breaks and Boardwalk may draw the biggest crowds, but those who know Santa Cruz know it's a prime hiking destination. Santa Cruz County is filled with nature preserves, state parks, and miles of coastline — all of which offer exceptional terrain for hiking trails. Retreat into the woods for the day at California's oldest state park or walk among the picture-perfect coastal bluffs at sunset.

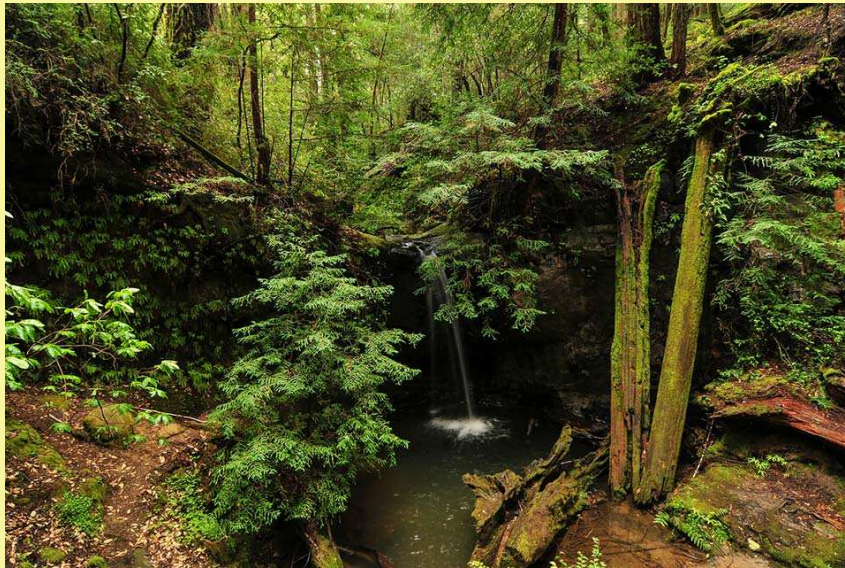
The Santa Cruz mountains will take you up to 3,000 feet, while under the forest canopy you'll find falls flowing and plant life thriving. Meanwhile, a walk along the iconic California coastline invigorates the soul.

From the mountains to the sea, here's our list of hikes you won't want to miss.

1. **Sunset Skyline Short Loop** – 2.9 miles in Big Basin Redwoods State Park



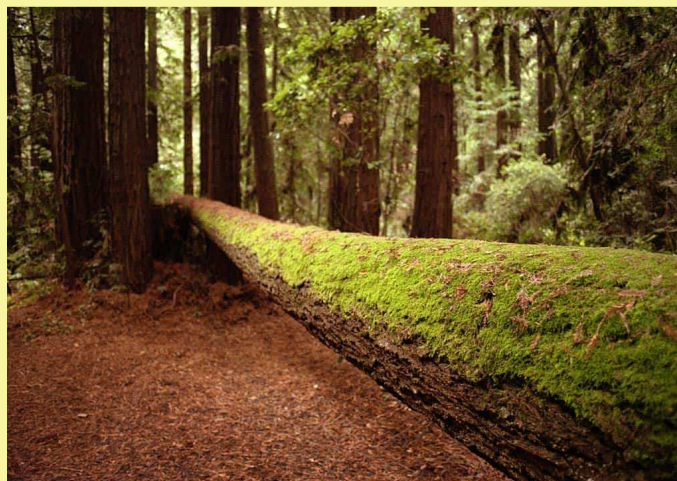
2. Sempervirens Falls via Sequoia Trail – 3.1 miles - Basin Redwoods SP



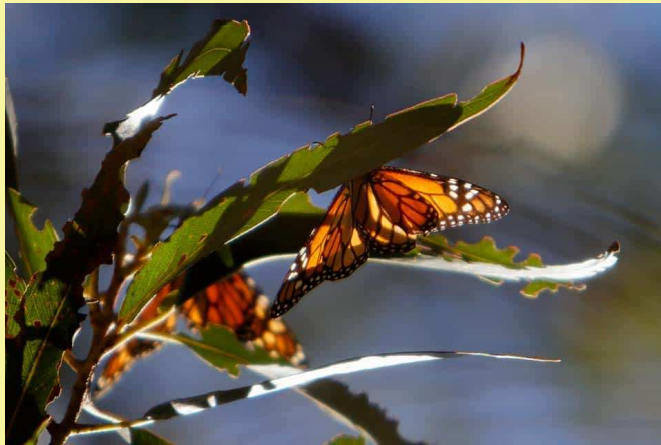
3. Fall Creek Trail – 6 miles – Henry Cowell State Park



4. Old Growth Loop – 1.6 miles – Forest of Nisene Marks State Park



5. Monarch Trail – 0.6 miles at Natural Bridges State Park



6. Old Cove Landing Trail – 2.5 miles at Wilder Ranch State Park



7. Saratoga Gap Trail – Hike about a mile out in Castle Rock SP

*Don't go all the way! There's a viewing platform near the Goat Rock area.



8. Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument – New! (2023 trails? Check it out!)