

APRIL 2018

# Active Family

Local Life & Style for the East Bay Area

**10 TIPS**  
*to Talk to Kids  
About A Tragedy*

**SUMMER  
CAMP  
GUIDE**

**THE MOTHER OF ALL  
PARENTING EPIDEMICS**  
*—the Preoccupied Mind*



[ TRAVEL ]

# Spring Break

## AT CARMEL VALLEY RANCH

I just discovered the winning formula for a perfect Spring Break destination; less than two-hours drive + onsite daycare + activities for everyone. Gorgeous grounds and views don't hurt either. This magical equation adds up to one fun-filled place — Carmel Valley Ranch.

Situated on 500 acres in the breathtaking Carmel Valley, Carmel Valley Ranch is like an upscale family

sleep-away camp, but with much better amenities. The ranch is neatly tucked away on private property within a gated area, so you can feel comfortable letting your teens roam free to swim or hike while you play a few rounds of golf or relax at the spa. Families with smaller children will appreciate the onsite childcare, as well. The gorgeous Carmel beaches are only a 20-minute drive away, so there's plenty to see and do in the surrounding areas, as well.



## The Digs...

Although Carmel Valley Ranch is extremely child-friendly and family-oriented, the property manages to maintain a serene, relaxing aura, which is why it's also so popular with honeymooners and couples who visit sans kids. There are separate pools for adults and children, with an adults-only pool located near the property's restaurant and lobby area "The Lodge," and a family pool located at "River Ranch," which houses the casual onsite cafe, children's splash zone, and other fun activities.

What also helps to keep a serene, private feel are the location of the guest suites, which are nestled throughout the trees and hills of the property. The suites are situated so that they're not clumped together all in one area, and thus feel somewhat private and spacious. Our suite had a charming outdoor patio overlooking the valley and hills beyond. It was the perfect spot to enjoy our morning coffee.

The rooms are cozy and upscale, decorated with a sparse, traditional aesthetic that doesn't compete with the outside beauty. Our suite had a pull-out bed/couch combo in addition to our comfy king-sized bed, which accommodated our family of four nicely.

# The Grounds...



Because the property is so expansive, you'll often need to drive or call a valet to get to the restaurant or pool area from your suite. It's certainly possible to walk, however it may be a 10-20 minute endeavor. But with a quick call from your room, a 24-hour, on-call valet will come scoop you up to take you and your family to your destination.

There is plenty to see and do at Carmel Valley Ranch, so be sure to take the time to drive through or request a tour of the property grounds, which include a charming garden that grows fresh, seasonal produce for the onsite restaurant, as well as a goat farm, chicken coop, salt house and bee hives. Children will delight in the feeding of the goats activity, which takes place most mornings. There is also a "Bee Experience" activity available, where guests try on a traditional beekeeping suite and get up close and personal with the resident bees and taste the delicious honey produced for the restaurant and spa.

Both bees and guests alike appreciate the Springtime splendor on the ranch, when Lavender blooms all over the property (another local product used at the spa) and the valley is lush and green.

If you enjoy playing golf, the expansive 18-hole course at Carmel Valley Ranch weaves through valley meadows, overlooking foothills and paralleling creeks, making it

one of the loveliest courses around. Designed by Pete Dye, the championship and award-winning course is the perfect way to spend a sunny, coastal day. The exclusive adults-only clubhouse is a great place to enjoy lunch in-between holes, or browse for golf accessories and apparel.

After a long day at golf, or perhaps while a significant other golfs, the spa at Carmel Valley Ranch hits all the right places. Spa Aiyana offers tranquil serenity in a relaxing, soothing setting. Enjoy a unique spa treatment using products and methods based on one of four gardens on property: Lavender, Herb, Aiyana, or Alchemist. Choose your treatment based on its invigorating, restoring or relaxing properties.

Whether you're golfing, at the spa or simply want to partake in one of the many exercise classes offered, the onsite childcare facilities are a wonderful amenity to take advantage of. For children ages 2-5, the daily, year-round "Busy Bees" camp keeps younger ones busy on an hourly basis, and children do not need to be potty trained to participate. For children ages 6-12, the "Ranch Hands Kids' Camp" is the place to be. Kids will make new friends and enjoy activities such as arts & crafts, swimming, golf, and games. Available in full day or half day packages, with lunch and/or snacks provided.

# The fun...

When you want to enjoy Carmel Valley Ranch as a family, you'll find plenty of activities for everyone to enjoy. At the kid-friendly River Ranch, swim and relax in the family pool and hot tub, and then dry off by the cozy fire pit. Younger kids will enjoy the splash pad, open during warm months, and babies and toddlers can frolic in the shallow toddler pool. Get in a family game of bocce ball at the bocce courts, or practice your archery at River Lawn.

There are plenty of hiking trails winding throughout the property, ranging from short and easy, to steep and challenging. Take the children to visit the goats and chickens at the farm, or spy on the many deer, hawk and other wildlife who call the property home. There are also junior tennis and golf lessons available, as well as horseback riding, (by appointment.)



from the property's gardens. Valley Kitchen also serves a Sunday Buffet Brunch that's not-to-be-missed. Children's menus are available for all meals.

On our trip we enjoyed a decadent, yet light wild mushroom croquette starter, as well as tangy chicken wings with honey and salt both produced on the property. The Pacific Northwest Halibut was served with a wonderfully silky celery root puree and deliciously earthy chanterelle mushrooms. The Double Cut Honey Brined Pork Chop was served with a roasted orchard apple sauce that we wished we had more of. The wine and cocktail list highlights local vineyards, naturally, as well as some very inventive cocktails (smoked lavender martini!) A Happy Hour menu is available Sunday through Thursday from 3-5 pm, offering half off selected food and wine by the glass. [www.carmelvalleyranch.com](http://www.carmelvalleyranch.com)



# The food...

There are three dining options available on the property, ranging from quick grab-and-go bites to elegant but family friendly full-service dining.

The River Ranch Cafe is a great spot for a casual breakfast or lunch, or quick snack by the pool. Enjoy a made-to-order burger, cobb salad, or turkey club while kids can choose from favorites like chicken fingers, chicken quesadillas and mac and cheese. Cocktails, beer and wine by the glass are available for purchase, as well. Grab a fresh fruit plate, smoothie or yogurt parfait to enjoy poolside.

At the Golf Clubhouse, breakfast and lunch options are available for golfers and club members to enjoy in a relaxing, casual setting. Options include a double-stuffed breakfast burrito, steel-cut oatmeal and buttermilk pancakes for breakfast. Lunch fare includes fish tacos, chili, french dip sandwich, salads and burgers.

Enjoy a more formal meal at Valley Kitchen, which is perfect for a romantic date night or family dinner. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, Valley Kitchen's menus showcase seasonal ingredients, often straight