

NEW YORK

In Santa Cruz, Watch World-Class Surfers, Picnic at Secluded Beaches, and Pet a Sleeping Shark

By [Julie Meade](#)



Everything to love about the West Coast comes together in California's original Surf City: big waves, windswept beaches, craft beer, redwood forests, lounging sea lions, and an old wooden roller coaster overlooking the sea.

Where to Stay

There is an ocean view from every guestroom at the [Dream Inn](#) (\$169–\$629*), a beachfront high-rise that was originally built in the 1960s. After a full renovation this year, the hotel reopened with a whimsical retro-surfer décor, which nods to the inn's origins and Santa Cruz's history as a surfing mecca. Dark-wood '60s-style furnishings and turquoise accents give the guestrooms a classic beachy feel, but they are plenty comfortable, too, with private balconies, iPod docks, and bathrobes. There's a full bar and lounge chairs on the open-air deck downstairs, where children splash in the heated pool overlooking the ocean, the wharf, and the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.