

CENTRAL COAST

Point San Luis Lighthouse

(SLO) Pecho Coastal Trail, Avila Beach, (805) 540-5771; Fee: Donation; Open: Wed, Sat; Key: FO, RR

Not only did time forget this lighthouse, almost everyone else did too! Built in the late 1880s, it was closed by order of the Coast Guard in 1974. Luckily for it, a group of local history stalwarts wouldn't let it fade from the picture altogether. In 1992 the federal government and local district agreed to make it into a public monument. It is one of the only waterfront buildings in Avila that dates back beyond the oil spill—possibly because it's almost 2 miles back and up on a hill. However, the only way to get a look at it is by doing the guided hike that's offered twice weekly. The trip up to the lighthouse and back is a 3½-mile loop, so it's not recommended for the out-of-shape or poorly shod. Must reserve tour slot in advance, first-come first-serve.

Pismo Beach Pier & Promenade

(5C) Beachfront, Pismo Beach; Fee: No; Open: Daily; Key: TH, KIDS

Pismo has always taken its hospitality obligations seriously, and for a century, it has all started at the pier. Stretching 1,370 feet, the current sturdy wooden structure

was built in 1985 over the footprint of former piers (built in 1924 and 1881) that had given way to the elements. Facilities include public restrooms, fish cleaning stations, and a bait shop. Stairs go from the pier down to the sand, and a new beach boardwalk starts at the pier and runs parallel to the ocean as far as the eye can see.

Cayucos Pier

(NSL) Cayucos; Fee: N; Open: Daily; Key: FO, PETS

Funny that this could outshine so many fancier attractions and activities, but nothing evokes a sense of place—and peace—quite like the view from this pier. Or even the view of it, from about 100 yards back. The sand, the surfers, a couple fishermen casting lines from the end, maybe a dog or two running in the surf below . . . The pier hasn't really changed since it was installed in the mid-1800s, and it's comforting to see that little in the immediate vicinity has either.

Casa del Herrero

(SB) 1387 East Valley Road, Montecito, (805) 565-5653, www.casadelherrero.com; Fee: Y; Open: Tours Wed and Sat in season; Key: RR

A historic estate preserved to look as it did in the 1920s, when