



# The Most Beautiful Villages and Towns of California

*Joan Tapper*

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**California's picturesque villages and small towns and its stunning landscape, from rugged sierras and fog-laced headlands to golden sand beaches and rolling oak-studded ranchland.**

California is nicknamed "The Golden State," and though the name applies literally to the color of its state flower, the golden poppy, it is also a metaphor for the hopes and dreams that have lured generations of settlers. There are villages that grew up around the famed Spanish mission trail, and communities that boomed because of Gold Rush fever. There are places whose natural beauty nurtured artists and writers, and fertile valleys that were home to vintners and cattlemen.

The state is known for reinventing itself, yet a surprising number of its towns and villages still offer charming glimpses into its history and heritage. Their architecture may be quaint, historic, or gracious and their physical settings may take the breath away, but they are also vital communities, prized for their small-town values, their lifestyle, food, and wine. This book showcases the most beautiful villages and towns of California in Nik Wheeler's stunning photography and Joan Tapper's perceptive commentaries. These evoke not just historic houses, but also streetscapes, parks, and physical surroundings.

The book is divided into four regions: Northern California Coast, Northern California Mountains and Valleys, Central and Southern California Coast, and Central and Southern California Mountains and Valleys. In addition, there are photographic essays on the wine country, missions, and ghost towns, plus essential information for tourists on places to stay and to eat. 323 color photographs.

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