Meetings & Events
G U I D E
Stunning Meeting and Event Venues Await on the Ventura County Coast

Find the meeting or conference space your team has been looking for. Ventura County Coast gives you 200,000 square feet of conference space and meeting rooms to choose from, and more than 5,000 guest rooms in 60 hotels and inns. From workshops to wine hour, this coastal California region has your criteria covered.

Ventura County Coast is a string of four cities – Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura and Port Hueneme – located off Highway 101 between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. You can’t go wrong planning a visit here, along with its year-round pleasant weather, Ventura County Coast is known for 22 miles of beaches, historic downtowns, outdoor activities, award-winning wineries and farm-to-table restaurants. This means professional development is paired with a relaxing atmosphere and unforgettable team building.

The meeting rooms in Ventura County Coast accommodate groups from 10 to 1,000. Whether you’re looking for a beachfront location or a full-service hotel conference center, you’ll find accommodations that match your team’s needs. Plus, lodging is affordable and welcoming to large groups.

To keep inspiration sustained, Ventura County Coast has a culinary experience all its own, created from an abundance of fresh and local ingredients. The region’s artisan chefs, locally grown produce, fresh seafood and rich farming heritage make the Ventura County Coast dining scene uniquely delicious. Be sure to try a local craft brew at the end of a hard day’s work.

Complete the experience with leisure activities from the four cities that make up Ventura County Coast.

CAMARILLO
Shop, golf and relax in Camarillo. Here, you’ll find the latest fashions at one of the nation’s best Premium Outlets, with brands like Banana Republic, Coach, Michael Kors, Polo Ralph Lauren, Tory Burch, Tommy Hilfiger and much more. Minutes down the road, visitors can savor the sights and smells of a delicious agricultural tradition and rediscover how sweet and inspiring fresh-picked fruits can taste.

For golf enthusiasts, Camarillo is a dream destination with incredible year-round weather and two pristine public golf courses. Those who simply want to relax and rejuvenate can enjoy indulgent spas, captivating art galleries and an enchanting old town brimming with history.

VENTURA
Ventura synthesizes surf culture, historic buildings and a bustling downtown scene to embody a true California getaway. Visitors to Ventura enjoy outdoor adventures, a lively arts scene and an oceanside proximity that makes it a chef’s paradise.

Get the whole team together for beach activities like surfing, kiteboarding or kayaking. Water enthusiasts will enjoy winter swells and summer whitecaps at Ventura’s beaches, but there are plenty of options for those who like to enjoy the surf culture from a distance. The oceanside Ventura Promenade is a festive place to take a stroll or ride bikes.

OXNARD
In the casual seaside city of Oxnard, you’ll find an active boating harbor, the nation’s largest kosher winery, the world-class Mullin Automotive Museum and a historic downtown bursting with multicultural flavors and architectural treasures. You’ll quickly discover why a tasty array of authentic Mexican cuisine and new eateries are putting Oxnard on the culinary map. In downtown Oxnard, Heritage Square is an amazing collection of magnificently restored homes and lushly landscaped gardens.

Oxnard’s harbor provides access to Channel Islands National Park, “America’s Galapagos.” The natural and cultural resources of its five different islands have been steadfastly preserved here and although it’s just a short boat trip away, these islands will have you feeling like you’re in a different world.

PORT HUENEME
Stroll wide sandy beaches in Port Hueneme, a seaside community located between Oxnard and Ventura. Its original Chumash Indian name, Wenemu, means “resting place.” And it doesn’t take much time at the fifty-acre Hueneme Beach Park to discover that this city is a place for refreshing the mind and soul.

Port Hueneme Beach Park’s expansive sandy beaches, south-facing surfing waves, volleyball courts, and walkable beachside promenade promise satisfaction for every kind of beachgoer – sunbathers and surfers alike.

SCHEDULE YOUR NEXT MEETING OR CONFERENCE

Bring your team to a place of inspiration. At venturacountycoast.com/meetings, you’ll find a guide to help you pick the perfect space for your needs and budget. From productive brainstorming to breathtaking views, Ventura County Coast has what you need. It’s time for your team to venture out.

For more information, please visit venturacountycoast.com/meetings.
Meetings and events in Ventura are great – but while you’re there, try to also make some time for fun. The Ventura County coast boasts endless enjoyable activities and here are just a few of them:

**BE A BEACH BUM**
Pack your beach towels, a picnic and plenty of sunscreen to soak up the sun on one of the region’s many pristine, uncrowded beaches. The local shores of Oxnard and Ventura have promenades and piers that will keep you entertained until the sun sets over the Pacific. Splurge or Save – Stop and shop at some of California’s best shopping destinations, including Camarillo Premium Outlets and The Collection in Oxnard. Old Town Camarillo, Ventura Harbor Village and Downtown Ventura are teeming with trendy boutiques, cool vintage shops and quirky antique stores that would put a smile on any shopper’s face regardless of budget.

**GET CULTURED**
Home to dozens of theaters, art galleries, museums and historic sites, like Mission San Buenaventura, founded in 1782, Ventura County Coast has a rich early California history with many stories to tell.

**SAVOR LOCAL GOODS**
Located on one of the most bountiful agricultural regions in the country, Ventura County Coast is a great culinary destination to dine farm-to-fork. Visit the local farmers markets for fresh goods, or cruise through the downtown areas to discover new ethnic restaurants, artisan wines and craft beers with local flavor.

**CRUISE AROUND**
Just an hour or two from most SoCal cities, Ventura County Coast is the type of destination you drive to and then leave your keys behind. Hop on the free trolleys in Ventura or the local shuttles in Oxnard, take the Amtrak Surfliner – or better yet, rent a bike and spend a few days on two-wheels, letting the ocean breeze blow through your hair.

**HAVE AN ADVENTURE**
Get in touch with your wild side at the Channel Islands National Park, a collection of five pristine, primitive islands that offer awe-inspiring views and unforgettable experiences. Island activities include hiking, picnicking, whale watching, kayaking, fishing and scuba diving.

**EXPLORE A CLASSIC SEASIDE VILLAGE**
Escape to yesteryear at Ventura Harbor Village, where you can ride a vintage carousel, play arcade games, get your fill of double-scoops at the ice cream parlor, eat fresh-caught fish, rent gear for all kinds of watersports, indulge in a harbor yacht cruise and much more.

**CATCH WAVES**
The Beach Boys sang about the killer surf spots in Ventura so if you’ve ever wanted to learn to surf, this is the place to do it. Sign up for lessons with one of the many organizations in the region and then try your skills at the famous Rincon or Surfer’s Point, regarded as some of the best beach breaks in California. Learn more by visiting venturacountycoast.com.

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**Seven Unique Coastal Activities to Enjoy in Ventura**

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10 Tips and Hacks for a Successfully Catered Event

When you are handed the daunting task of organizing the catering for the office, business or even private party, it’s hard not to panic, especially once you start browsing online at the million and one options when you search the term “party food” or “catering.” The mind races... where do I start? The options are far and wide. The best place to start is to ask yourself what size of event am I undertaking here? Big events (100 people or more) take a lot of work and you will definitely need professional help. But if you are catering for less than 100 people it is definitely possible to organize this with a minimum of fuss, if you answer ten basic questions:

1. DO YOU HAVE A BUDGET?
Everyone has a budget, even if you haven’t formalized it yet. It's first thing to finalize. Try your hardest to stick to it, otherwise things can get out of control and you could be in a lot of trouble with your boss.

2. WHAT TIME IS YOUR EVENT?
This determines the style of food you need, do you need breakfast, lunch, dinner or just something to absorb the alcohol before people move on.

3. HOW LONG WILL YOU NEED FOOD?
Sometimes people come and go from parties so it’s important to cater to everybody as they arrive at the party, this is the definition of a good host. Sometimes people also want something later in the night, midnight munchies are not uncommon at many modern weddings.

4. WHO ARE YOU FEEDING?
Gender and age go a long way in determining what type of food, how much food, what quality food, that you are preparing to serve. It’s so obvious a point that people forget to consider – they think we all eat the same amount, but that’s not true. This can determine whether you over order or under order the amount of food for your function.

5. IS IT A MEAL OR SOMETHING JUST TO EAT?
Subsequent to all the questions up to number four, this point will answer itself once you have examined the guest list, the time of eating, the style of party, whether you want something substantial or just something to tickle the fancy.

6. IS IT STANDING OR SITTING? OR BOTH?
This is an important question because finger food and seated dining are two very different types of catering. Canapés can start the night on a special note, then the chef can whip up something very special for your seated occasion. It’s also worth noting that canapés or finger food are not going to fill people up, unless you have 10 to 12 per person.

7. ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS?
More and more we are seeing that people are allergic to food, this can cause anaphylactic reaction which can cause severe injury or even death. This means you have to be on top of your game when ordering food for people with allergies. The other issue concerning this question is the diversity of food lifestyles on offer - i.e. vegans, vegetarians, et cetera.

8. IS THERE A PLACE TO PREPARE AND SERVE THE CATERING?
This is important for yourself or the catering company to know, as experience tells us that if you don’t have a private or semi-private area to organize your food, then interruptions and general confusion will reign, you’ve heard the saying – too many chefs spoil the broth!

9. DO YOU NEED STAFF OR SELF-SERVE?
Sometimes people like to do these things on their own, which will save a lot of money. This is definitely possible, as so many people these days are such good cooks, however there are other options available. Our company - Box Catering in Sydney - does drop off catering. Drop off catering is where chefs prepare the food to the point where it’s ready to serve and load it into temperature controlled boxes, be they hot or cold, and those boxes are delivered to the party venue, ready for the customer to serve when he or she is ready. This is a great option for many people, especially as all the food can be ordered online and we are always available for consulting if you need any help.

10. WHO IS CLEANING UP?
The rule in many homes is that if you cook you don’t clean. However this might not apply as your business event winds up, just be sure to have people allocated otherwise it will fall in your lap.

Information for this article was provided by Box Catering.
It’s Easier than Ever to Kayak in the Channel Islands

Launching a kayak in the Channel Islands Harbor is much easier these days thanks to the installation of a new “EZ Kayak Launch” on the Ventura County Day Dock near the boat launch ramp. Visitors can access the kayak launch ramp by entering the parking area at Curlew Way and Victoria Avenue.

The installation of the kayak launch ramp expands access to the Harbor waters for kayakers. Kayakers may also continue to launch from Hobie Beach, the launch ramp, and day docks around the Harbor.

“We couldn’t be more pleased to increase access for the growing community of kayakers,” said Lyn Krieger, Ventura County Harbor Department Director. “This flexible, easy-to-use launch makes getting into a kayak easier for kayakers, from beginners to experts.”

Harbor Department maintenance staff installed the EZ Kayak Launch last year. The launch ramp features integrated paddle notches that make launching and docking safe and easy; a V-shaped entry which centers a kayak for consistent, stable, and confident launches; and a wider format which allows visitors to launch kayaks and canoes.

The Channel Islands Harbor is a gem on the California coast between Port Hueneme and Ventura. It was built as a recreational harbor in the 1960s and 1970s on 310 acres of land and water, with approximately 2,150 boat slips, as well as marina facilities, restaurants, sportfishing facilities, chandleries and shops.

The Harbor is divided into three areas (west, east and peninsula) served by separate public roads, with each area providing different services. The west side consists of marinas, a linear park, restaurants, residential development and retail businesses. The peninsula is dominated by hotel development, marinas, apartments and condominiums. The east side is primarily commercial and serves boaters by offering boat yards, a marine supply store, boat sales, law enforcement, administration and search and rescue facilities.

The Harbor is owned and operated by the County of Ventura. The majority of the Harbor is operated by businesses that have been granted long-term ground leases by the Board of Supervisors.

Learn more about the Channel Islands by visiting channelislandsharbor.org.
MPI to Develop Meeting & Event Management Degree

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and the L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University (SDSU) announced recently they will collaborate to create the first graduate-level degree program offered in the United States focused on meeting and event management for mid and senior-level professionals. In addition, they plan to develop a related academic certificate program for non-traditional students.

Scheduled to launch in 2019, the master’s degree program will incorporate experiential learning, simulations, and industry partner mentoring, and will be delivered online with meet-ups on the SDSU campus to accommodate work schedules of students. It will be taught by faculty who have worked in the meeting and event industry, and feature guest lecturers from the industry as well. After successful completion of the program, students will be awarded a master of science degree in meeting and event management from SDSU.

“We are thrilled about this opportunity to co-create unique and rigorous educational programming with the globally-recognized L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at SDSU,” said Paul Van Deventer, president and CEO of MPI. “MPI continuously strives to bring more visibility and credibility to the meeting and event industry, and the new master’s degree program if students wish to pursue that path. “We could not be more excited about co-creating this first of its kind master’s degree in meeting and event management. It is about time that this profession is recognized as needing high-level knowledge, skills and abilities taught in an academically rigorous and relevant manner at the graduate level. This master’s degree will assist mid- to senior-level professionals in developing their skills while still employed, benefiting both themselves and their organizations,” said Carl Winston, Director, L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

“MPI has been an industry leader dedicated to enhancing the skills and career success of its core constituency, meeting professionals. MPI continues to facilitate the professionalization of the meeting and event industry. The leadership and faculty at the SDSU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management are equally committed to excellence and innovative approaches in delivering a graduate level educational experience of the very highest caliber. This collaboration is the genesis of what could very well become a game changer in the meeting and event industry,” said Vince LaRuffa, senior vice president of Resort Sales and Marketing at Universal Orlando Resort, SDSU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management Master’s Program alumnus, and previous member of the MPI Foundation Global Board of Trustees and MPI Board of Directors.

Since 2015, MPI and SDSU have worked together in partnership with Event Model Generation to present the Event Design Certificate (EDC) Program, an immersive three-day training course that teaches a systematic 10-step visual approach to event design.

MPI is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. The organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry.

MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals including more than 17,000 engaged members and its Plan Your Meetings audience. It has more than 90 chapters and clubs in 19 countries. “When we meet, we change the world.”

Information for this article was provided by Meeting Professionals International. To learn more about the new degree or other general meetings industry information, visit mpiweb.org.
Survey Shows that Weekend Getaways Are on the Rise

Several years ago, the term “staycation” was coined to describe the rising number of people who vacation in their own backyard – staying close to home while spending time away from their daily routines. A new survey released last year from Enterprise, however, reveals that the “staycation” trend may be coming to an end. According to Enterprise’s “Weekend Getaway Survey,” nearly two-thirds of individuals who plan on taking weekend getaways will hit the road as opposed to staying in their own neighborhoods.

That’s one of several findings from the Enterprise survey, which analyzed consumers’ weekend travel plans.

“The weekend getaway is something that many of our customers really look forward to. They’re driving to see friends and family, attend sporting events, visit a new bed and breakfast, and so much more. A weekend away is a time for them to escape – to reset and recharge before jumping back into another week,” said Steve Short, vice president at Enterprise. “With this in mind, we thought it’d be fun to take a look at the outlook for weekend getaways: Where are people going, who are they going with and what are they taking with them?”

“Some of the results were surprising, but also very encouraging in the sense that so many people intend to take weekends away – nearly 8 in 10 Americans are planning at least one weekend trip,” Short continued. “We see that as further proof that taking time away to explore what we’re passionate about and be with the ones who matter most just makes our lives richer and better.”

When consumers were asked about the weekend trip they are most excited about taking, their responses included the following:

**HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE.**
- There is no one-size-fits-all weekend getaway destination. Twenty-four percent are planning to visit a major city, 19 percent are planning to visit the beach and 14 percent are planning to visit the mountains. Other destinations include a small town (9%), the lake (5%) and the countryside (5%).
- Repeat destinations seem to be preferred – only three in 10 plan to go somewhere new on their weekend getaway.

**WE. ARE. FAM-I-LY!**
- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of parents taking a weekend getaway plan to take the kids with them.

**RELAXING IS A PRIORITY.**
- When asked to choose a word that best describes their weekend getaway, “relaxing” ranked first, with 39 percent of respondents selecting that word.
- Aligning with the relaxation theme, the top weekend getaway activities this year include: “Enjoying new restaurants, bars or pubs” (44%) and “de-stressing” (38%).
- The thrill is gone?
- When asked to choose a word that best describes their weekend getaway, only 7 percent of respondents selected “romantic.”

**ROAD TRIPS RULE.**
- The preferred mode of transportation for weekend getaways is the car (74%).
- Asked what feature they want in a car to take on their weekend getaway, 55 percent chose “comfort,” followed by “cruise control” (41%). Only 14 percent desire “luxury” in their weekend getaway vehicle.

**SO LONG, MOM AND DAD!**
- While the “Sandwich Generation” may be on the rise, travelers aren’t including mom and dad in their weekend getaways. Only 6 percent plan to travel with their parents.

**PUPPY STAY HOME.**
- Only two in 10 dog owners plan to take their pets on their weekend getaways.

**PAYING YOUR WAY.**
- Sixty-one percent of weekend getaway takers plan to spend less than $500, while 39 percent plan to spend between $500-$1,000+.

Information for this article was provided by Enterprise. For more information about Enterprise, visit enterprise.com.