



GUIDE TO EXPLORING

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# Santa Barbara with Kids

*from tots to  
preteens*



**Annabelle Abba Brownell**



Pacific Coast Publishing  
Santa Barbara, California

# **Guide to Exploring Santa Barbara with Kids**

*from tots to preteens*

by Annabelle Abba Brownell



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The information in this book is presented as a guide. Every attempt has been made to confirm the accuracy of the content. Pacific Coast Publishing assumes no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, or omissions in this book.

# Dedication

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For my precious family,  
Peter, Hunter and Liliana,  
who make my every day  
an adventure.





## Acknowledgements

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**I**would like to express gratitude to the many families with whom I have had the fortune to spend time with in this Santa Barbara haven. Of those, I would like to note an extraordinary group of women who comprise the informal Montecito Playgroup. Their spirit made my landing in Santa Barbara so much more joyful. I have also had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful families in this community as my children attend local camps, classes, and school. A warm felt thanks goes to these super parents.

In addition, I was fortunate to find a local author and fellow alumnus from Thunderbird, School of Global Management. He had written a family guidebook in the past and graciously offered to edit this book. I offer my sincere gratitude to Stephen Ringler for thoroughly reviewing this guide.





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## Introduction

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**T**he inspiration for this book came from the many parents I have had the pleasure to meet while living in this California oasis. A number of these parents have been visitors to this wonderful destination, and customers of mine at Santa Barbara Baby Company. In the name of good customer service I wanted to offer visitors a special guide to this area that focused on family friendly destinations and amenities. It is with this inspiration that I wrote this book.

Whether local or just visiting, most parents will agree that your adventure as a family is more enjoyable when you choose the most amenable establishment or activity for children. An enriched child leads to a happy parent and good experience for the whole family. With that said, choose adventures in this book which would suit your child best. A woman in my writing class shared a story with me about her first visit to Santa Barbara with her young children. Looking to have a relaxing day, she was encouraged by acquaintances to take a boat ride out to the Anacapa Islands with her children. The thought of a family boat ride on a sunny day was enticing, even more so the indulgence of a Margarita on the white sandy beach when

she arrived. The reality was that the boat ride was well over an hour across rough waters with a seasick child, only to arrive on a rocky beach with no signs of commerce; not even a warm beer was an option. In response to this story, another student claimed that she had visited those same islands with her child and had a wonderful day. I present this book as a guide to help you make informed choices based on your own intuition. Add a good attitude, a sense of adventure, and perhaps a Margarita, and off you go!



## About This Book

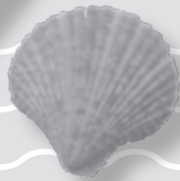
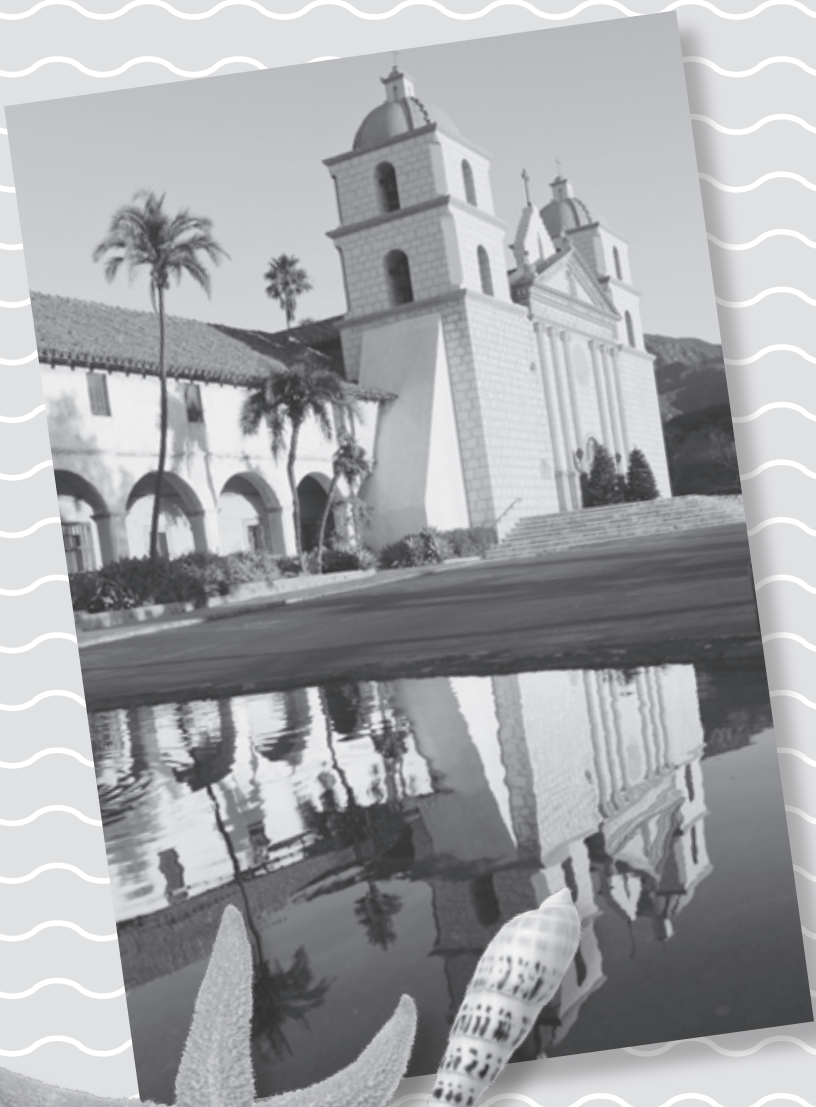


**T**his book is offered as a practical guide to families visiting or living with children in the Santa Barbara area. All the suggestions in this book are derived from the authors own experience as well as other local parents. In the interest of impartiality, there is neither paid advertising nor paid entries in this book.

Every effort has been made to present up-to-date and accurate information in this book. Regardless, businesses and events may be discontinued or change their prices, hours, and locations. It is recommended that you call ahead of time to confirm the information. Furthermore, all the reviews made in this book are made solely by the author, and not anyone representing the respective location which is being reviewed.

The author of this book, Annabelle Abba Brownell, is owner of the Santa Barbara Baby Company, a baby and toddler equipment rental service. For travel tips about traveling with infants and toddlers, visit the web site at [www.SBbabyCo.com](http://www.SBbabyCo.com).

Please direct input and feedback on this guidebook to [sales@pacificcoastpub.com](mailto:sales@pacificcoastpub.com)



## About Santa Barbara

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**S**anta Barbara is a coastal community nestled between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Hailed as the American Riviera, Santa Barbara is 90 miles north of Los Angeles, and 300 miles south of San Francisco. The landscape, weather, and amenities make this an ideal location for a family outing, as well as those looking for relaxation in the sun. In addition to enjoying days at the beach, families can bike ride, sail, fish, kayak, play tennis, golf, camp, horseback ride, and enjoy movies or theatre. There are festivals and events throughout the year in the city and nearby communities.

Thriving with vibrant history, Spanish architecture, and legendary Southern California lifestyle, Santa Barbara is the quintessential California beach town. Boasting a lush Mediterranean climate, a prosperous arts community, world-class shopping and dining, and renowned wine country, Santa Barbara is an outstanding destination.

### History

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Abounding in resources and natural beauty, Santa Barbara was first discovered by the Chumash Indians. Sustained by

fish-rich waters and mountain game, the Chumash are primarily known for their fine basketry, peculiar cave paintings, and shell trade.

Portuguese explorer Juan Cabrillo laid claim to the region in the name of Spain in 1542. Sixty years later, Sebastian Vizcaino was spared his ships and lives of his crew by taking shelter in the Santa Barbara channel from a great storm. A friar on board one of the ships named the coastal landfall and bay in honor of Saint Barbara.

Two hundred years later, Father Junipero Serra founded the Santa Barbara Presidio in 1782, adding the Mission Santa Barbara four years later. The Presidios were military garrisons for the protection of missionaries established in San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey and San Francisco. Mission Santa Barbara is the first of three missions (including Santa Inés in Solvang and La Purísima in Lompoc) in what is now Santa Barbara County. Evidence of the Spanish influence in Santa Barbara is noticeable on her streets blooming with colorful Spanish architecture.

In 1822 the citizens of Santa Barbara swore allegiance to the Empire of Mexico ending Spanish rule in California. This rule was short-lived. In 1848 Mexico signed a treaty ceding California to the United States. Although California attained statehood in 1850, Santa Barbara retained much of its sedate pueblo atmosphere until the late 1800s, when affluent and famous visitors began arriving in great numbers.

Santa Barbara County “boomed” in the late 1800’s. Streets were paved and public sewers laid. Even during the 1915-17 depression, Santa Barbara County forged ahead attracting tourists and wealthy residents from the East. This boom in-

creased with the growth of the motion pictures industry. In 1910, the American Film Company opened Flying A Studio in the heart of Santa Barbara. This was the largest studio of its kind in the world, ultimately producing more than one thousand silent films. Although the industry eventually found its home farther south in Hollywood, movie stars had acquired a taste of this extraordinary town. They were drawn to the rich landscape and almost perfect weather, as well as the privacy and escape from the shimmer of tinsel town.

For over a century Santa Barbara has been recognized as a world-class destination. Resorts have been springing up for decades to accommodate the city's affluent guests. Ever since the era of silent films, celebrities such as Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford have owned property in the area. Charlie Chaplin built the Montecito Inn in 1928, largely for visitors from Hollywood. Acquired primarily for friends and guests, Ronald Colman and Alvin Weingand bought the San Ysidro Ranch in 1935. This trend has continued to this day with many celebrities scattered throughout the coastal and mountainous neighborhoods. One can occasionally spot celebrities such as the beloved Oprah Winfrey and famous Rob Lowe in their hometown of Montecito. Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Kevin Costner have also been lured into nearby homes by the spectacular coastal lifestyle. In turn, an astounding range of successful entrepreneurs have found themselves equally attracted to the area. Ty Warner, founder of Beanie Babies, is an active resident and real estate investor, with the Ty Warner Sea Center named in his honor. It appears that the fortunate individuals who have the luxury to choose any geographical location in which to reside are drawn to Santa Barbara County.

## Weather

Santa Barbara has over 300 days of sun per year. The climate is mild with very low humidity. Annual precipitation averages approximate 16 inches and occurs mostly between December and March. The average annual rainfall is only 18 inches, which is comparable to many desert communities.

For 40 miles, the Santa Barbara coastline runs almost due East/West. This alignment moderates the ocean currents that flow past Santa Barbara. The nearby mountains are relatively close to the ocean and provide protection from the inland heat as well as winter storms. A chain of islands starting 20 miles off shore breaks that force of ocean storms as well.

The year-round average temperature is a comfortable 62 degrees. As such, there is no off-season in Santa Barbara.

Month	Average High	Average Low	Average Inches of Rainfall
January	67	43	4.3
February	71	46	3.8
March	66	44	2.3
April	70	50	1.5
May	69	52	.5
June	71	55	.1
July	75	57	.05
August	77	61	.1
September	76	58	.3
October	73	52	.4
November	75	52	2.2
December	68	51	2.5

The best combination of temperature and outside activities is usually considered to be from June through October. However, the winter season in Santa Barbara is exceptionally mild with a combination of sunny days and invigorating temperatures. During the months of December through April, many visitors flock to Santa Barbara from colder climates in North America, and Europe.

## Santa Barbara Neighborhoods



### **The Waterfront**

Regarded as one of the most beautiful coastlines in the country, the Santa Barbara waterfront is complete with its' scenic Harbor and Wharf. Stroll from East to West Beach and absorb the Pacific setting and social activity. Along the way, you will encounter parks, restaurants, shops, bike trails, and coastal landscape. Running from noon until sunset every half hour, the Waterfront Shuttle runs continuously along this coastline. Cabrillo Boulevard is the quintessential California beach strand. It is great for strolling or biking with the family. There are activities and rental services along the coast. Older kids can skateboard at Skaters Point, located at the beach, just east of Stearns Wharf. Chase Palm Park has a wonderful playground, gardens with long stretches of grass, picnic tables and a pond. There is a classic, wood-carved grand carousel that operates daily. Families enjoy concerts here every Thursday night during the summer.

## **The Harbor**

The Harbor is home to both yachts and fishing boats. There are many options for water adventure including kayak and jet ski rental, sailing and boat excursions, as well as whale watching trips. The restaurants are fun and plentiful. Visit the discovery section for kids at the Maritime Museum. Follow the walking path to the far end of the harbor where you will find a sand bar for lounging. Kids will get a kick out of watching all the boats pass by or the fisherman offload their daily catch of fish and squid.

## **Downtown**

Downtown Santa Barbara hosts a variety of retailers from national to unique local specialty shops. The Spanish-Mediterranean architecture features outdoor paseos, beautifully landscaped plazas, and brick-lined sidewalks. Enjoy casual or fine dining and a variety of cultural venues including galleries, performing arts, historic sites and museums. A Red Tile Map at the Visitors Center on Garden Street and Cabrillo offers a self-guided tour of this area.

## **Mission District**

Perhaps the bud that gave bloom to the Spanish-influenced architecture in the area, the Mission Santa Barbara sits majestically in the heart of the Mission District. A visit to the nearby Museum of Natural History and Botanical Gardens will give you an additional glimpse into the areas storied past.

## **Riviera**

Touted as the 'American Riviera', Santa Barbara is likened to its European counterpart because of this region. Its temperate

climate and East-West coastal orientation allow for day-long southerly sun to shine upon this region, and down on the shores and cityscape below. One drive up these panoramic hillsides and you will immediately feel the magnificence of this ocean-perched locale. With the sun-shining and a clear view, you will find it difficult to return to where you came from.

### **Uptown**

Generally visited for shopping purposes, upper State Street is festooned by clusters of retail merchants. La Cumbre Plaza is a large shopping mall anchored by two department stores, Macys and Sears, and more than 60 shops, restaurants, services and easy parking. There is also a Farmers Market every Wednesday.

## **Neighboring Communities**



### **Carpinteria**

About 10 minutes south of the city of Santa Barbara, is this delightful California beach town – casual, friendly and inviting. Downtown is lined with mom and pop stores, taquerias and burger joints. Most people stroll leisurely around town in shorts, T-shirts and sandals. The beach is extensive, and a wonderful experience for families. It is considered one of safest beaches along the Pacific Coast due to the extended shallow waters. Spend a day in Carpinteria when you would like a fun, family beach day and stroll.

## **Montecito**

This township is adjacent to Santa Barbara. It is a lush coastal community filled with elegant landscapes and great Mediterranean estates. Visit the safe and clean beaches, upscale shops, and great restaurants.

## **Summerland**

This quaint seaside village is nestled on a hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It is a popular attraction for antique shoppers and surfers alike. Many come here on weekends to enjoy the friendly cafes and quiet beaches.

## **Goleta**

Descended from a rich farming and ranching industry, Goleta has grown into a family-oriented community. It was best known as the top lemon producing region in the country and still hosts the Annual Lemon Festival. You'll find excellent golf facilities, including the renowned coastal Sandpiper Golf Course, as well as the venerated Bacara Resort. The esteemed University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) sits along the coastline in a small section of town called Isla Vista, and brings to it an academic stimulus.

## **Santa Ynez Valley**

Santa Ynez Valley is comprised of six communities: Ballard, Buellton, Los Alamos, Los Olivos, Santa Ynez village, and Solvang. It is recognized for its' celebrated wineries. In addition to the 50 world-class wineries, visitors can go hiking, biking, fishing, boating or visit a horse farm. Cachuma Lake is a popular destination for families wanting to get outdoors,

as is Solvang (Little Denmark) which claims over 300 stores, charming bakeries and restaurants.

## Ojai

Tucked away in the valley beyond, Ojai is widely identified for being an active art community, spa retreat and spiritual sanctuary. The serenity of the environment is alluring, and the services and amenities cater to the laid back ambiance.

## Ventura & Oxnard

Most families are drawn to the coastal elements of both the Ventura and Oxnard areas. The beaches are active, expansive, and the sunsets are spectacular. The Ventura Harbor Village and Channel Islands Harbor feature lively marinas, enjoyable shops and restaurants, as well as seasonal activities for the kids.

# Transportation

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**T**ransportation options in Santa Barbara can be inexpensive due to the relative proximity of most destinations in the town and vicinity. If you are traveling with young children under 6 years in age, a rental car may be your best option due to car seat requirements.

### **Santa Barbara Airport (SBA):**

Options from the airport include rental cars, taxi and limousine services, and airport shuttles. The airport hosts national rental agencies with offices adjacent to the terminal. Taxis can be hailed just outside the terminal as well. See the phone

numbers at the end of this section for local transportation companies. Some hotels offer a free shuttle service from the airport - check with the hotel directly for details. For a door-to-door airport shuttle, contact Super Ride at (805) 683-9636 or Roadrunner at 800-247-7919.

### **To/From Los Angeles Airport (LAX):**

The best options are a rental car from LAX or the Santa Barbara Airbus, a daily shuttle that operates between Santa Barbara and LAX. For the Airbus, visit [www.SantaBarbaraAirbus.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraAirbus.com) or call (805) 964-7759

### **To/From Burbank Airport:**

The best options are a rental car or the Amtrak train which travels directly from Santa Barbara to Burbank Airport. The Pacific Surfliner is the Amtrak line you will be riding. Visit [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) for more details or call 1-800-872-7245

## **Rental Cars**

<b>Airport Agencies</b>	<b>Reservation Number</b>	<b>Terminal Number</b>
<b>Avis</b>	<i>800.831.2847</i>	<i>805.964.4848</i>
<b>Budget</b>	<i>800.527.0700</i>	<i>805.967.1202</i>
<b>Hertz</b>	<i>800.654.3131</i>	<i>805.967.0411</i>
<b>National</b>	<i>800.227.7368</i>	<i>805.967.1202</i>
<b>Alamo</b>	<i>800.462.5266</i>	<i>805.967.1202</i>
<b>Off-Airport Agencies</b>	<b>Reservation Number</b>	<b>Local Number</b>
<b>Enterprise</b>	<i>800-736-8222</i>	<i>805.683.0067</i>
<b>Thrifty</b>	<i>800-847-4389</i>	<i>805.681.1222</i>

<b>Taxicabs</b>	<b>Reservation Number</b>
<b>American Cab</b>	<b>(805) 689-0683</b>
<b>Allen Simmons Taxi</b>	<b>(805) 331-3159</b>
<b>Blue Dolphin Cab</b>	<b>(805) 964-7888</b>
<b>Beachside Taxi</b>	<b>(805) 963-0412</b>
<b>Fiesta Taxi</b>	<b>(805) 895-5555</b>
<b>Gold Cab Taxi</b>	<b>(805) 681-9000</b>
<b>Rose Cab</b>	<b>(805) 564-2600</b>
<b>Rockstar Cab*</b>	<b>(805) 451-9999</b>
<b>Santa Barbara Airport Cab</b>	<b>(805) 895-2422</b>
<b>Santa Barbara Checker Cab</b>	<b>(805) 560-8284</b>
<b>Scenic Tours Taxi</b>	<b>(805) 403-5466</b>
<b>Seaside Taxi</b>	<b>(805) 565-3002</b>
<b>Yellow Cab</b>	<b>(805) 965-5111</b>

\*Rockstar Cab claims to have a “10,000 Song iPod in every cab”—perhaps one song is a lullaby?

<b>Limousines</b>	<b>Reservation Number</b>
<b>JLS Transportation</b>	<b>(805) 961-9111</b>
<b>Limousine Link &amp; Sedan Service</b>	<b>(805) 898-9506</b>
<b>Luxury By Day</b>	<b>(805) 965-6869</b>
<b>Nite Owl Limousine Service</b>	<b>(805) 383-0214</b>
<b>Rockstar Limousine</b>	<b>(805) 451-9999</b>
<b>Santa Barbara Limousine</b>	<b>(805) 964-5466</b>
<b>Shasta Limousine Service</b>	<b>(805) 452-3976</b>
<b>Spencer's Limousine &amp; Tours</b>	<b>(805) 884-9700</b>

**Special Needs:**

If you are traveling with a senior or passenger who is disabled, try EasyLift. They are available from dawn to late night and can accommodate an extra companion with the disabled passenger as well.

**Contact Info:** (805) 681-1181

[www.EasyLift.org](http://www.EasyLift.org)

**Other Local Shuttles**  
.....**Downtown Shuttle and Waterfront Shuttle**

These shuttles operate all day long with pick-ups every 10 to 30 minutes. Look for a turquoise and white colored electric shuttle bus running along Cabrillo Boulevard and along downtown State Street. The kids will enjoy the ride and it's an inexpensive adventure for only 25 cents. Ask the driver for a free shuttle transfer upon boarding your first shuttle – you can use it for your next ride.

**Contact Info:** [www.sbmtl.gov](http://www.sbmtl.gov) (See Waterfront Shuttle)

For a complete guide to traveling Santa Barbara without a car, go to the web site below. Order a car free map online and receive transportation discounts too!

**Contact Info:** [www.SantaBarbaraCarFree.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraCarFree.com)

## Emergency Contacts

EMERGENCY	911
<b>FIRE</b>	(805) 965-5254 Santa Barbara City (805) 969-7762 Montecito (805) 684-4591 Summerland (805) 684-4591 Carpinteria (805) 681-5500 Goleta
<b>POLICE</b>	(805) 897-2300 Santa Barbara City (805) 684-4561 Montecito (805) 684-4561 Summerland (805) 684-4561 Carpinteria (805) 681-4100 Goleta
<b>California Missing Childrens Hotline</b>	1-800-222-3463
<b>Coast Guard Search and Rescue</b>	1-800-221-8724
<b>Poison Control Center</b>	1-800-222-1222
<b>Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital- Outpatient</b>	1-(805) 682-7111
<b>Children's Medical Clinic</b>	1-(805) 965-1095 1-(805) 564-2532 After Hours
<b>Pediatric Dental Practice</b>	1-(805) 963-4404

## Car Seat Installation

The County Fire Stations offer to check your car seat installation free of charge. Call the Santa Barbara County Fire Department Injury Prevention Hotline, 681-5550 x5532. The county offers a monthly two-hour presentation to the public as well. Please call the number above for more information.