

Here is an extemporaneous recollection of selected attractions and highways around California.

### **LOS ANGELES AND VICINITY:**

There are many museums that I feel are worthwhile. Among them are the California Science Center and the Museum of Natural History. Both are in Exposition Park near the Memorial Coliseum and across the street from my alma mater, USC.

La Brea Tar Pits and the LA County Museum of Art on Wilshire Boulevard in the Hancock Park area. (Department of Redundancy Department: In Spanish, brea means tar. So what we have is the Tar Tar Pits. But I digress.)

The Getty Museum off Coast Highway a tad north of the western terminus of Sunset Boulevard.

The Griffith Observatory in Griffith Park. In the bad old days it was open to the public every day, but I understand that their hours have been reduced significantly. Be sure to check in advance. Tickets may be required now, but when I was living in southern California, it was always free. If you take Vermont Avenue north of Los Feliz Boulevard, you pass by the Greek Theatre. This is a fantastic venue for concerts and other performances as it is outdoors in a canyon. The acoustics are perfect!

Mulholland Drive starts near the Hollywood Freeway and heads west through some pricey residential areas to the San Diego Freeway. It continues further west, but poops out after several miles.

### **HIGHWAY 1:**

Most are familiar with this highway. Be sure that the road is open between Morro Bay and Carmel Valley. North of the Golden Gate it is a nice leisurely drive through the coast range and along the coast.

### **HIGHWAY 2:**

From its junction with Interstate 210 in La Cañada-Flintridge north and then across the transverse range east to its terminus at highway 138. Wrightwood is a touristy type town with places to eat.

(As an aside, a nice drive from south of Palmdale to the Glendale/Montrose area uses Angeles **Forest** Highway. It connects up with Angeles **Crest** Highway (highway 2) north of La Cañada before descending to Interstate 210.

### **HIGHWAY 3:**

This is a backwoods highway from highway 36 (not always open) through Hayfork to Weaverville. North of Weaverville it crosses the Cascades to Siskiyou County and takes you to Yreka.

### **HIGHWAY 4:**

From Angels Camp on Highway 49 east to Arnold to its eastern terminus at highway 89. About 25 miles of this highway is one lane-plus from the turnoff to Mt. Reba across Ebbetts Pass before it returns to two full lanes. Ebbetts Pass is closed in winter.

### **HIGHWAY 49:**

This is the Mother Lode highway that starts in Oakhurst south of Yosemite and winds its way through Mariposa, Angels Camp, San Andreas, Jackson, Placerville, Auburn, Grass Valley/Nevada City, Downieville, Sierraville, and Loyalton before terminating at Vinton at highway 70. Many sights to see, including the location at Coloma (north of Placerville) where Marshall discovered gold on the south fork of the American River. It is a state park, and you are permitted to pan for gold and keep what you collect.

### **HIGHWAY 70:**

From Oroville it ascends the Feather River Canyon to its junction with highway 89. It proceeds through Quincy after which it continues due east to its terminus at US395.

### **HIGHWAY 89:**

This begins at Interstate 5 south of Mt. Shasta City and meanders southeast to its southern terminus at US395 just shy of the Nevada line. This takes you to McArthur-Burney Falls State Park (about a 2-mile fairly easy hike). It is the northern entrance to Lassen National Park (open seasonally from about June-November). After it splits off highway 70 east of Quincy, it goes to Truckee on Interstate 80, then along the western shore of Lake Tahoe to US50. At Meyers it heads south again to highway 88, then on to Markleeville (Grover Hot Springs is about 7 miles west of Markleeville) before climbing Monitor Pass before it ends at US395. Monitor Pass is closed in winter.

For my money, when I travel between Susanville and Truckee, I always take 70 west of US395 to highway 49 at Vinton to highway 89 at Sierraville before reaching Truckee. The mileage is about the same as taking 395 to Reno and then onto Interstate 80. You avoid all the urban traffic in Reno. The time difference is usually about 10-15 minutes longer taking the back highways, and could break even at certain times of day.

### **HIGHWAY 96:**

This route goes from Willow Creek on highway 299 to Interstate 5 north of Yreka. It passes through Bigfoot Country (LOL). It parallels the Trinity River north of Willow Creek until its confluence with the Klamath River at Weitchpec. It then parallels the Klamath all the way to Interstate 5. (As an aside, four dams on the Klamath east of Interstate 5 are in the process of being demolished, so the river will slowly be returning to its natural state over the next few years.)

### **HIGHWAY 108:**

From Sonora east up and over Sonora Pass to its terminus at US395 about 17 miles north of Bridgeport. The hairpin turns on the eastern side of the pass are fun to drive. Once the highway levels out near Leavitt Lake, it passes by the Marine Corp Mountain Warfare Training Center. This highway is closed in winter.

### **HIGHWAY 130:**

This highway starts at US101 (Alum Rock Road exit) and proceeds to climb up to Mt. Hamilton. The James Lick observatory is there. At the summit, the state-maintained portion of the highway ends, and it becomes a county road that descends to Interstate 5 near Patterson. This is quite the serpentine road.

### **SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA:**

There are a number of roads and highways to take you through the delta and its tiny towns. Highway 84 (mostly unsigned) north of Rio Vista crosses the Sacramento River using a two-car ferry, The Real McCoy. The ferry is free. But check road conditions because it is out of service from time-to-time. Highway 160 (the River Road) goes from Antioch into Sacramento. Northbound there is a toll bridge across the river while heading south it is free. Highway 220 is tucked within the delta, and there is a second small free ferry across one of the channels. The pear festival is in early August. Also grown in this region are walnuts and asparagus and grapes.

### **US 199:**

This goes from Crescent City on US101 to Interstate 5 at Grants Pass, Oregon. The California side is

much better as the road hugs the Smith River for much of its journey. It passes through coastal redwoods. In Oregon it is mostly flat and dotted with rural residences.

#### **HIGHWAY 270:**

This branches off US395 a little south of Bridgeport. It takes you to Bodie. Bodie is a ghost town that was an active gold mine in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is a state park. The buildings are in a state of "arrested decay." The highway ends about 3 miles shy of Bodie and turns into a gravel road. The drive is nothing special, but Bodie is neat. This road is closed in winter.

#### **HIGHWAY 299:**

From Eureka/Arcata off US101 west to Weaverville and then onto Redding. The road undulates east of Arcata until Willow Creek where it hugs the Trinity River for many miles. East of Weaverville it passes Whiskeytown Lake before it reaches Redding. East of Redding it climbs to a plateau before arriving at Alturas.

#### **US 395:**

From its junction with highway 14 near Pearsonville north into the Owens Valley, Bishop, Lee Vining, Bridgeport and into Nevada. Different times of year provide different vistas.

There is some repetition with these suggestions. Mountain roads. Ranching and farming. Riparian habitat. As far as photo opportunities, there might not be the splendor of the Canadian Rockies or the Great Smokies. We just don't get that much precipitation from April through November, and we are a heckuva a lot hotter than those regions.

This is not exhaustive of course. But perhaps there might be a nugget or two nestled among the others that piques your interest.