

Top 3 Golf Resorts in California

Picture a land where golf runs to the very heart of society, where there's brilliant sunshine, a guaranteed friendly welcome and some outstanding courses. You've just pictured California's golf scene – and with its varied and stunning environments and excellent food and wine, it's no wonder that the region is quickly becoming a must on any discerning golfer's holiday plans. The trouble is that California's golf clubs are numerous as well as fine so it can be an overwhelming choice...Just exactly where should you stay and where should you play? Quite a pleasant dilemma, but nonetheless, you want to make sure you get it right. Here's my top three golf resorts in California.

Four Seasons Resort Aviara

Okay, so the Four Seasons Resort only has one course in its grounds – but what a round of golf! California's Aviara golf club has been named as one of the best resort golf courses in America by both Golf Digest and Golf Magazine and offers a memorable coastal layout with a par 72, punctuated by colourful flora and fauna and stunning scenery. This Californian golf club really must be played to be believed!

The course was designed by Arnold Palmer and opened in 1991, providing 7,007 yards of rolling fairways and challenging bunker and water features. The biggest water 'feature' of all, of course, is the ocean view hole which provides an image you won't forget – just make sure it doesn't put you off your shot.

Pelican Hill

Although the golf resort at Pelican Hill opens in January next year, we already know it's going to be very special. It's a \$1.3bn investment by one of the wealthiest men in the world. He's recruited some of the finest hoteliers and spent fortunes on the facilities and bedrooms. We were very, very impressed during our pre-opening visit. The "perfected" two courses and superb clubhouse have been open for a year and the service, scenery and experience are remarkable.

Pelican Hill will definitely be a memorable addition to the best golf holidays in California. Pacific views, massive bedrooms, beyond state-of-the-art facilities and gracious service...It's a must.

As well as the qualities of the resort, what makes Pelican Hill golf club in California so great? There are two courses which instantly makes it twice as enjoyable and the classic Newport and Laguna Beaches are just down the road. Plus, Los Angeles is only 45 minutes away. Variety, quality, ease of access and very pretty golf...That's great!

The Ocean North golf course is famous for the visual treat it presents golfers with. Not only is it set within 400 acres of stunning reserve but several of the holes run alongside the cliffs. The Ocean South matches the beauty of its 'north cousin' but is a more subtle challenge with tricky bunkers, deceptive elevations and canyons all vying for your ball. Sensational USA golf.

Pebble Beach Resorts

In terms of sheer golfing brilliance in such a confined space, you can't beat a stay at Pebble Beach. With three hotels and three world-class courses, it's been rated at USA No.1 for many years and you can't fault it. Spyglass is my favourite course, just beating the more famous Pebble Beach but Spanish Bay is also a beautiful links course...It's a tremendous trio.

Pebble Beach Golf Links: opened in 1919, has hosted numerous competitions, including the US Open several times and is consistently voted No. 1 Public course in America by Golf Digest.

Another Californian golf course honoured by Golf Digest is Spyglass Hill. The unusual name of the course is matched by the names of some of the holes – all based on Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island' – "Black Dog" and "Billy Bones" being two examples. Opened in 1966, this difficult course changes its terrain at the drop of a hat. While the first five holes are characterised by sandy seaside dunes, the remaining 14 suddenly require you to cut through pines and elevated greens. Although it is rated as a Par 72, the stroke average during the 1999 US Amateur competition was over 79 so be ready to play Stableford and swallow your pride. Finally, the Links at Spanish Bay is a course that could almost be in Scotland (were it not for the outstanding weather!) – even with sandy wasteland, bristly grasses and a strong ocean breeze, it's an enjoyable challenge that rarely becomes frustrating.

And if you want even more, there's Poppy Hills, Cordevalle and Pasatiempo (all in the US Top 100) within an hour. Simply beyond world-class golfing

breaks.

Pebble Beach also wins thanks to the charms of Carmel and the easy-going beaches and great, great weather. The food is delicious and very, very fresh. All in all, a golf holiday in California offers a quality change from the European game. Next time you're considering a golfing break abroad, you have to consider America's sunshine coast...And why not go for a couple of weeks and tour all three or my recommendations?

About the Author

Morgan Clarke is the Chairman of Your Golf Holidays, a company that has been providing bespoke golf holidays for over 25 years. They are experts in the world's best places to play, including [golf clubs in California](#), France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Dubai, Morocco and over 20 other countries.

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