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## Now's the Time for Half Moon Bay



With the summer fog blown off, and the fall and winter holidays looming, Half Moon Bay makes the perfect, effortless weekend getaway this time of year. Because it's a mere 30 miles away down relatively uncongested 280, you won't have to leave work early on a Friday to be in HMB by dinnertime. Make a rezzie at [Pasta Moon](#), a warm, Tuscan-inspired eatery on Main Street where the owner circulates among the tables to make sure everyone's happy. Order the lightly battered asparagus, the pear-and-prosciutto wood-fired pizza and, for entrees, the pesto risotto with day boat scallops or the grilled Arctic char in a rosemary demi-glaze. This, my friends, is the way to end a work week.

For bedding town, HMB's small downtown is dotted with charming inns. The recently renovated Spanish-style [Half Moon Bay Inn](#) is exceedingly fetching, with a sidewalk-front check-in desk and a tile staircase leading up to a variety of accommodations: small Main Street-facing rooms that'll make you feel you're at a boutique hotel in Oaxaca, or larger apartments and suites decorated in a variety of styles from rustic to country cottage. Your doggy is welcome to stay with you in any of them (and if you're sans pooch, you might want to ask if there are any barkers staying overnight, as some of the rooms are close together).

The other, obvious option for lodging is the sprawling [Ritz Carlton Half Moon Bay](#), located just outside of town on a bluff overlooking the Pacific. If you're a golfer, or a spa junkie, or you simply want to indulge in four-star style, this is the place to do it. The windswept links are spectacular; the hourlong exfoliation-plus-massage-plus-hot-stones-under-a-Vichy-shower will leave you a limp and happy creature; and you can spend the rest of the day on the multi-tiered patio in an Adirondack chair, reading. Or get in the car and explore: The hotel has recently devised a 62-mile Signature Drive, similar to Carmel's 17-mile drive, that takes you through pumpkin patches, redwood forests and the Santa Cruz Mountains before circling back to the grand hotel.

For dinner, [Sam's Chowder House](#) will satisfy your inner seafood lover with Dungeness crab, a New England-style lobster clambake for two, or a simple and very buttery lobster roll that's been dubbed one of the best sandwiches in America by *The Today Show*. You won't believe how packed the place gets, so be sure to make a reservation, and come early to enjoy the live music on the deck.

On Sunday, before heading back to reality, stop by [Sea Horse Ranch](#) and sign up for a guided horseback ride along a coastal trail that emerges right onto HMB's sandy beach. You'll pass HMB State Park, where you can camp oceanside—next time, perhaps.

**By [Robin Rinaldi](#)**