REDWOOD
FOREST FOUNDATION

10 BEST DAY HIKES ON THE LOST COAST

THIS GUIDE HIGHLIGHTS 10 OF THE BEST DAY HIKES ALONG THE LOST COAST, RANGING FROM SHORT SCENIC WALKS TO LONGER, MORE ADVENTUROUS ROUTES.



THE LOST COAST is known for its rugged, remote beauty, but you don’t need to commit to a multi-day backpacking trip to experience it.

From coastal bluffs to black sand beaches and redwood-lined trails, there are a number of incredible day hikes that offer a glimpse into one of California’s most untouched landscapes.

10 BEST DAY HIKES ON THE LOST COAST

QUICK OVERVIEW

Location: Northern California (Humboldt & Mendocino Counties)
Best for: Day hikers, weekend visitors, all experience levels
Trail types: Coastal, beach, bluff, and forest trails
Best time to visit: May–October (weather + trail conditions vary)



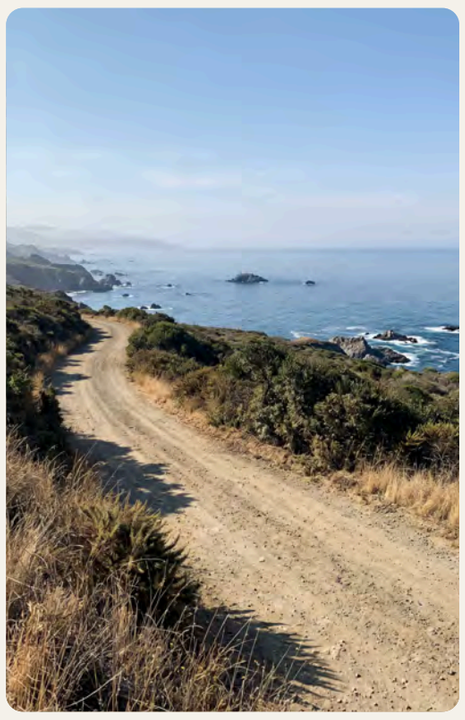
MATTOLE BEACH TO PUNTA GORDA LIGHTHOUSE

Distance: ~8 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Highlights: Remote coastline, historic lighthouse, wildlife

One of the most iconic sections of the Lost Coast Trail, this out-and-back hike takes you along a wild stretch of beach to the Punta Gorda Lighthouse. Keep an eye out for harbor seals resting along the shore.



USAL BEACH COASTAL TRAIL

Distance: ~3–5 miles (varies)

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Highlights: Remote beach access, campsites, scenic coastline

A great option for a shorter, more relaxed day exploring one of the southern access points of the Lost Coast.



BLACK SANDS BEACH TO SHELTER COVE

Distance: ~4–6 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Highlights: Dramatic black sand beaches, cliffs, ocean views

This is one of the most accessible ways to experience the Lost Coast's signature black sand and rugged shoreline.



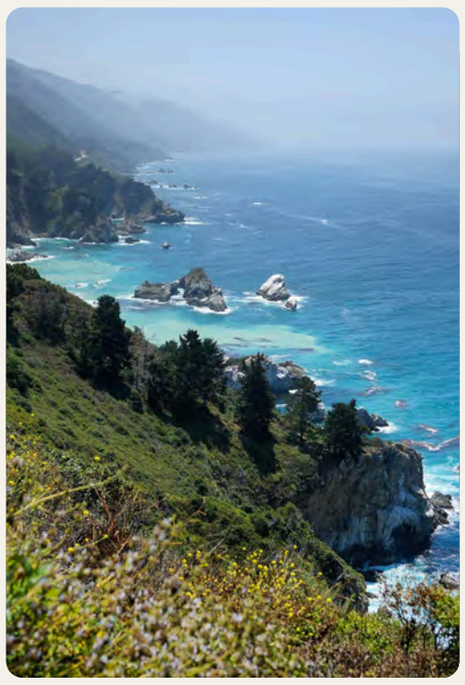
HIDDEN VALLEY TRAIL (KING RANGE)

Distance: ~3 miles round trip

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Highlights: Wildflowers, forested canyon, seasonal creek

This inland trail offers a break from the coastline with lush greenery and seasonal blooms.



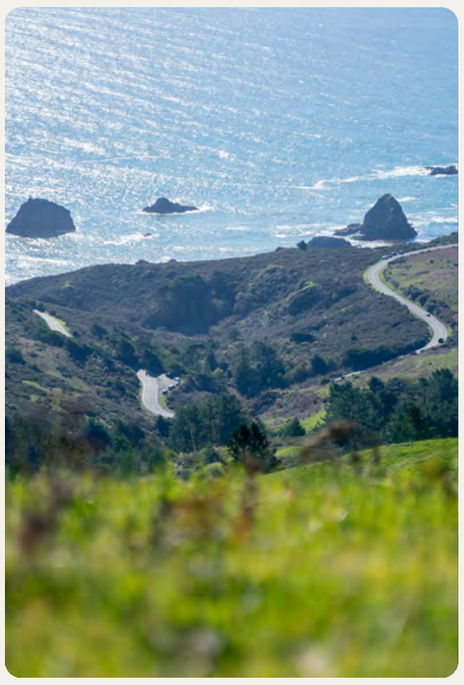
SINKYONE WILDERNESS – NEEDLE ROCK TO BEAR HARBOR

Distance: ~8 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate to challenging

Highlights: Coastal forest, ocean views, historic homestead sites

A beautiful mix of forest and coastline, this trail offers a quieter and more varied experience of the Lost Coast.



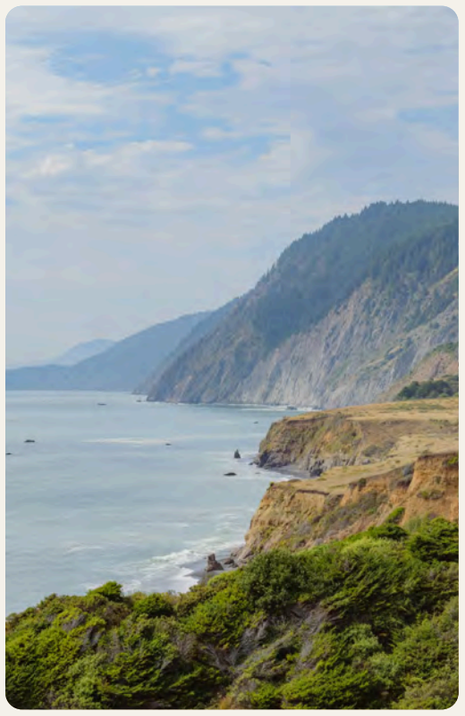
SPANISH RIDGE TRAIL

Distance: ~5–7 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Highlights: Sweeping coastal views, ridge-line hiking

For a higher vantage point, this trail offers expansive views of the coastline and surrounding wilderness.



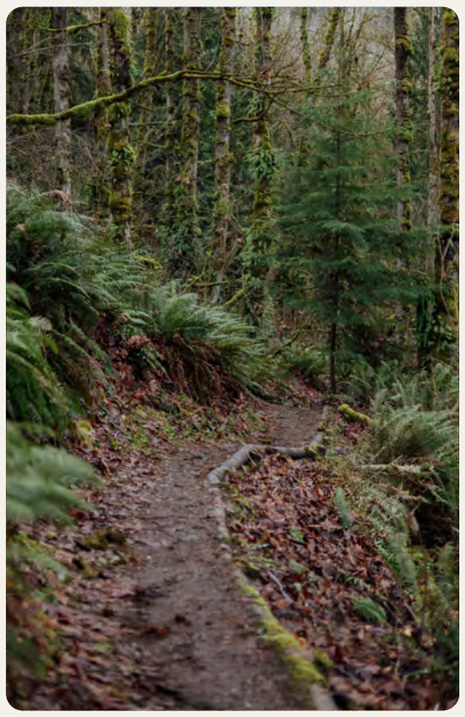
LOST COAST HEADLANDS (NEAR SHELTER COVE)

Distance: ~2–4 miles

Difficulty: Easy

Highlights: Clifftop views, accessible trails, ocean overlooks

A great option for a shorter, scenic walk with incredible views and easy access.



CHEMISE MOUNTAIN TRAIL

Distance: ~4–6 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate to challenging

Highlights: Forest + coastal views, elevation gain

A great mix of terrain with rewarding views from higher elevations.



BEAR HARBOR TO JONES BEACH (SINKYONE WILDERNESS)

Distance: ~4–6 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Highlights: Remote beaches, quiet coastline, wildlife

A less-traveled section that offers solitude and beautiful coastal scenery.



TOLKAN CAMPGROUND AREA TRAILS

Distance: ~2–4 miles

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Highlights: Redwoods, river access, quieter inland setting

Perfect for those looking to explore a more forested side of the Lost Coast region.

PRO TIPS

- **Check tide conditions if hiking along the beach**
- **Wear sturdy shoes, terrain can be uneven and sandy**
- **Bring layers, weather can change quickly**
- **Start early to avoid wind and maximize daylight**
- **Expect limited cell service**



You don’t need to backpack the entire Lost Coast Trail to experience its beauty.

These day hikes offer a range of ways to explore the coastline, forests, and remote landscapes that make this region so special, whether you’re visiting for a few hours or a full weekend.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP?

Check out our other guides and be sure to stop by our Welcome Center in Fort Bragg

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