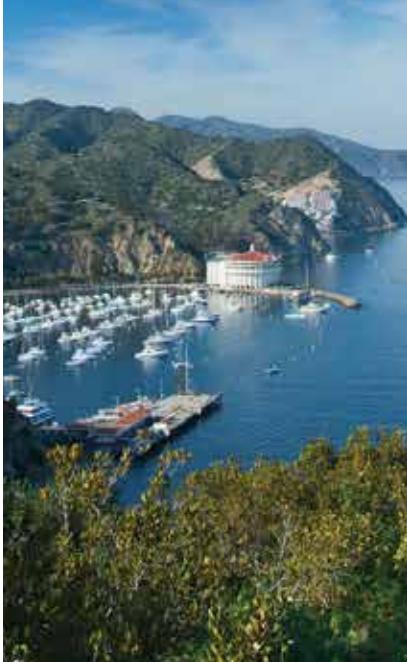


## Catalina Island, Southern California

**Catalina Island** stands the test of time as Southern California's premier location for romance, adventure and relaxation.

**Get There** Catalina Express offers one hour ferry rides to Catalina Island. Operates daily and year round from three Southern California mainland ports in San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point. CatalinaExpress.com; 800-315-7925

**Where to Stay** Catalina Island Vacation Rentals offers a wide variety of vacation home rentals, including cottages and condos in Avalon, ocean front villas at Hamilton Cove and casas in Two Harbors. All are unique and vary in price. CIVR.com; 855-557-6716



Learn more about Catalina Island at your local Auto Club branch.



Leaping Lamb Farm in Oregon

[ Live Well ]

## Back to the Farm

You can probably find your local farmers market, but would you know what to do if confronted with an actual vegetable patch? Scottie Jones, co-owner of Leaping Lamb Farm in Alsea, Oregon, says most people don't.

"I've asked guests to go out to the garden and pick something for dinner, and then realized that I needed to go with them because they didn't know what to do," Jones says. Such farm-to-table experiences are a growing trend among working farms, with many opening their doors to overnight guests (rates run about \$125 per night). Following are a few reasons to visit a farm.

**Taste something fresh.** "The biggest surprise out here for people is the flavor of fresh eggs, and I love seeing their reactions," says Jones, whose 64-acre sheep farm includes vegetable gardens, orchards, and chickens. Many farm-stay farms give guests access to the gardens, kitchen, and farm-cooked meals.

**Learn more about the food you eat.** Milk a goat, then make some cheese at the tiny Mariposa Creamery in the foothills northeast of Los Angeles. The Institute of Domestic Technology offers a bushel of food-crafting classes there, and the "milk talk" from Mariposa cofounder Gloria Putnam will give you a new view of dairy products.

**Appreciate farmers.** Watch—or help with—the harvests at Humble Hill Farm outside Ithaca, New York, then follow the goods to market. "It's definitely not an easy profession,"

says co-owner Courtney Sullivan. "It's important to tell the story of the people who choose to dedicate their lives so that you can have healthy, organic food."

**Support small farms.** "When we moved here, we didn't really understand the economics of small farms," Jones says. She opened Leaping Lamb to guests to help pay the bills and launched the Farm Stay U.S. website (farmstayus.com) to connect host farms with vacationers. Farm-stay fees are helping Putnam and her partner expand Mariposa Creamery.

Accommodations range from tents to guest cottages to Mariposa's little Airstream Bambi. Guests can help with farm chores or just soak up the peace and quiet. It's all part of the farm-stay experience—and preserving farming for future generations. —Christina Elston