

## Trip 5 – Episode #9: You Know You're From Santa Cruz...

For several months, a regular post has popped up on my Facebook page: “You Know You're From Santa Cruz When...” Followed by a photo of a stunning seaside or an amazing sunset. I don't know why I get those posts. The only possibility I can think of is that I have a friend (Hi Kris) who used to live in Santa Cruz and she may have re-posted it once and I may have seen it and then I got caught up in the algorithm.

We're always on the lookout for places where we might want to spend a more significant length of time. So, when we were in Monterey, which is quite close to Santa Cruz, we thought we should check it out.

Our first introduction was promising. A rally advocating for “Food Not Bombs” And a truck promoting Peace, Love and Joy. Okay. We're with you so far.



We drove through some neighbourhoods and saw some quaint, colourful places.







And some cultural spots that would be interesting to explore.



They had a busy but pleasant looking pedestrian mall downtown.



Then we drove down to the shore to see Natural Bridges State Park. Unfortunately, we were there on the Saturday of a holiday weekend. A lot of other people had the same idea, so there wasn't much room for Charles to park and we only got glimpses of the rocky shoreline. And never did see the "Natural Bridge".





We were impressed at how well they'd designed the city, ensuring that people had access to the water, not condo developers (unlike a certain city we know well). The walkway followed the shoreline and allowed the public to enjoy it freely. And the day we were there, lots of people were out taking advantage of it.





They were obviously still dealing with the damage from the January storms. You can see the orange fencing along the precipice. And there were major detours in part of the downtown. The price you pay for being right on the coast.



Apparently, you know you're in Santa Cruz when ... there are so many surfers, there's a Surfing Museum!



That weekend, they were apparently having a surfing competition, so they were everywhere!





It was no surprise to find a very large, very busy marina.



We continued through town, commenting on how Santa Cruz seemed to be a quiet, pleasant town with a real laid-back feel. Maybe we should think about returning for a longer stay.

And then ...



And ...





Of course, traffic was snarled and people were walking and jogging and skateboarding and we discovered what we didn't know because we AREN'T from Santa Cruz, that it has a VERY busy, if award-winning amusement park right downtown.



So, despite the lovely coastline, the quaint, colourful homes, the Peace, Love and Joy, and despite the fact that its boardwalk was voted the World's Best Seaside Amusement Park, we realized probably wouldn't commit to spending a long time in Santa Cruz.

We left the bustle of the boardwalk behind ...



And we headed back toward Monterey, taking the scenic route along the water as much as possible. We drove through an area called Pleasure Point, which was much more to our liking.









And then Capitola Village...









We stopped in Seacliff where, when you look one way, there's a beautiful beach.



And when you look the other way, you see the Palo Alto Concrete Ship, which was towed to the area in 1929 with the idea of turning it into an amusement park. It took two years for it to go bust. And it's sat there ever since.



We returned to our comfortable little spot in Veteran's Memorial Park in Monterey.



All in all, it was an interesting day, and there is certainly a lot to appreciate in Santa Cruz.

**Note:** I started writing this before hearing about the terrible floods happening in Santa Cruz and other areas along the coast and in the mountains in California in the past day. In fact, many of the places we travelled through during February are now experiencing road closures, power outages, lots of damage and evacuations due to rain and fallen trees.

I just grabbed this online.



Our thoughts, today, are with those who *are* from Santa Cruz.