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SAN LUIS OBISPO FACT SHEET

Location: Set 200 miles north of Los Angeles and 220 miles south of San Francisco, San Luis Obispo is at the heart of California's magnificent Central Coast. The city is sheltered by volcanic peaks a few miles from the Pacific Ocean and is surrounded by abundant protected open space, beyond which stretch vineyards, agricultural country and ranch land. SLO anchors the San Luis Obispo North Coast Byway, a stretch of world-famous Highway 1 that has been federally designated an All-American Road. The city is 150 mi south of Monterey and 100 mi north of Santa Barbara.

Climate: A perfect Mediterranean marine climate keeps San Luis Obispo sunny and warm year-round, with cool nights. The temperature, which averages 70°F, rarely creeps above the 80s or below the 40s. The city receives about 22 inches of rain annually, meaning that the typical year sees 315 sunny days.

Geography: San Luis Obispo occupies about 10 square miles at the foot of the southern Santa Lucia mountain range. With 80 miles of Pacific coastline, San Luis Obispo County spreads across more than 3,300 square miles east and west of the mountains. The landscape is one of pristine seas, wide beaches, pine-studded bluffs, oak forests, open

grassland and chaparral-covered hills. Wildlife as diverse as sea otters and elephant seals, great blue herons and peregrine falcons, monarch butterflies and black-tailed deer make their home around SLO.

Population: San Luis Obispo's 44,000 residents have a median age of 27 years and an average household income of \$61,000. The city consistently ranks at the top of nationwide quality-of-life surveys and "best places to live" lists. Altogether, 258,000 people live in SLO County, where the median home price is \$475,000.

Education: California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), with 18,000 students, was founded in 1901. Part of the California State University system, it is best known for its engineering, agriculture, business and architecture programs. More than 10,000 students attend Cuesta College, a community college that offers 61 degree and 70 certificate programs.

Major Attractions: *Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa*, the fifth of California's 21 Spanish missions, was founded in 1772.

Downtown SLO is a humming, pedestrian-friendly zone of shops, restaurants and galleries in turn-of-the-20th century buildings.

Thursday Night Farmers' Market brings a fiesta of produce, crafts, barbecue, street food and live entertainment to downtown.

San Luis Obispo wine country lies 5 minutes south of downtown, putting two dozen premier wineries within easy reach.

Madonna Inn is a landmark of whimsical architecture, down-home rococo style, and 109 uniquely themed rooms.

Hearst Castle, William Randolph Hearst's elaborate Central Coast summer home, stands in solitary splendor 45 minutes to the north.

Recreation: Within the city limits, hikers, mountain-bikers, cyclists and equestrians have access to an extensive municipal trail system maintained in the city's parks, canyons and mountains. Two golf courses in town and five more county-wide are pleasantly playable all year. At the beach, surfing, sea-kayaking, whale-watching and boogie-boarding are favorites, and in the mountains three major lakes draw water skiers, anglers, sailors and wind-surfers. Bird watching and

wildlife viewing are exceptional throughout the area. For pure relaxation, spas have tapped the area's mineral-rich natural hot springs.

Events: *Year-round:* Art After Dark gallery and studio receptions, first Fridays
Year-round: Farmers Market on Thursday Nights
February: Culinary Carnival
March: SLO International Film Festival
May: SLO Vintners Association Roll Out the Barrels Festival
Summer: Friday Concerts in the Plaza, featuring variety of music
July: Festival Mozaic
September: I Madonnari Italian street-painting festival
September: Plein Air Festival
October: Arts Obispo Open Studios Tour
October: Plein Air Festival
November: SLO Vintners Association Harvest Festival

Access: *By car:* San Luis Obispo lies at the junction of U.S. 101 and coastal Highway 1, allowing easy access from north and south. From the east, Highways 41, 46, 58 and 166 link cities along Interstate 5 with the coast.
By air: San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (SBP) is served by United Airlines and US Airways. Passengers can fly non-stop from and to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Phoenix.
By rail: Amtrak serves San Luis Obispo several times a day via the Coast Starlight from Seattle and the Pacific Surfliner from San Diego.

Lodging: Approximately 38 lodgings offering a total of more than 1,800 rooms serve visitors to San Luis Obispo. Accommodations range from small, independent inns to large chain hotels and from romantic wine country B&Bs to family-friendly name-brand motels. At all levels, room rates are an excellent value in comparison to those in better known destinations on the California coast.

Meetings: Several hotels and other properties in San Luis Obispo offer meeting facilities for groups of 80 to 550. Most lodgings and some restaurants have conference rooms to accommodate smaller groups.

Visitor Information:

San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center
1039 Chorro Street (corner Higuera Street)
805-781-2777
www.visitslo.com

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