

# Pier hopping along the California coast

By Christopher Smith, Los Angeles Times

How was that little vacation you took? You remember. It cost you almost nothing, it burned some calories (or, after that ice cream cone, added a few) and briefly immersed you in quintessential California.

It was that walk on a pier, those structures that stretch out like a gateway into the Pacific. Perhaps we don't think about them much, but they're part of what has made California California: Piers (or wharfs as they were called in the mid-19th century) once were the primary way of moving food, cargo and travelers on and off sailing vessels. After having walked 75 of California's finest piers in the last year and a half, I also found they were the best way to move...me.

During my jaunts up and down the coast, I skipped some of them. I didn't do military piers (not open to the public); I eschewed commercial business piers (too dull). I ignored the un-touristed reaches of the San Francisco Bay, particularly leading back into the freshwater Sacramento Delta. And I blew off the state's thousands of private and public boat docks (a pier has pilings, a dock has none), leaving those for some other pilgrim.

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