

- **Title:** *Mother's Day Weekend in Carmel, CA – A Temporary Return to Normal*

- **Description:**

In May 2020, during Mother's Day weekend, my wife, Jennifer, our son, Evan, and I took a much-needed trip to Carmel on the coast of Northern California from our home in Sacramento—a roughly three-hour drive. Evan, a junior at an all-boys Catholic high school, had been doing virtual learning since March, and the isolation weighed heavily on him and our entire family. Carmel, with its clean and fresh ocean air and mountain views, was an excellent place to decompress and have a peaceful and relaxing respite from the turmoil of COVID-19.

We stayed at a small boutique hotel we had visited before, where the staff was relieved to have guests again, though housekeeping and room service were unavailable. We spent much of our time outdoors, playing golf at Pebble Beach, relaxing at the beach, and avoiding the non-stop news coverage of COVID-19. A major highlight was having our first restaurant meal in months at a famous seafood restaurant in Monterey, dining outdoors in a large tent, socially distanced, with masked servers and sanitization stations.

Despite the refreshing break, reality set in when we returned home to Sacramento. The school year ended, and when the new one started remotely in August, it became clear normalcy was still far away. The high school canceled fall sports, masks remained required in public, and the weight of restrictions continued. Over the summer, we spent time by the pool, with my son gradually having friends over more often.

The memories of Carmel faded as the pandemic's grip continued. The short return to normal was only temporary, and life remained in limbo for months to come.

- **Tags:** Arizona State University, HST 643, Spring A Session 2025, History of Tourism, COVID-19, Family Travel, Monterey, Carmel, Outdoor Dining, Virtual Learning, Pandemic Tourism, Sacramento, Remote Learning, Mask Mandates, Pebble Beach, Boutique Hotel, Social Distancing, Summer 2020, Pandemic School Year

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- **Date:** May 2020 – August 2020

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- **Location:** Carmel, Monterey, and Sacramento, California, USA