



1850

California becomes 31st state in the Union.

1850s-1870s

Rail travel enables first major waves of mainstream leisure travel with the founding of California's first railroad, the Sacramento Valley Railroad, and the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad.

1890s-1920

The first gasoline automobile is sold; mainstream automobile travel creates new connectivity between beyond-the-rails destinations.

1920s-1930s

First California ski resort, motel open, along with the launch of the state's first commercial flight; airline rental car locations popularize the growing industry; Highway 1 opens in Big Sur.

1950s-1970s

Federal Aid Highway Act establishes the United States' first Interstate Highway System; I-80 opens as California's first freeway; Disneyland, Universal Studios Hollywood, SeaWorld open and become some of the world's most-visited attractions.

1989-1992

Loma Prieta earthquake devastates Bay Area and visitation to California plummets to all-time low; in response, early tourism leaders concept idea for public-private partnership to promote travel to California.

1995-1998

Gov. Pete Wilson signs Tourism Marketing Act, enabling state's travel industry to assess itself to conduct statewide tourism marketing; passage of first industry-wide referendum gives the newly created California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) legal standing.

1998-2000

CTTC scales globally, opens first international offices; first California Welcome Centers open.

2001

9/11 rocks nation; domestic travel drops by 50 percent.

2002-2003

Tourism returns to pre-9/11 levels.

2006

California meets domestic market share goals in tourism benchmarks five years ahead of projections.

2008-2010

Great Recession grips nation; leisure and hospitality one of only four sectors to post employment gains.

2011-2013

California becomes first state in country to surpass \$100 billion in travel-related spending.

2016-2019

100th Tourism Business Improvement District opens; tourism industry repeatedly breaks own records, sets new high-water marks in travel spending, employment, tax revenues.