

This is California's Most Affordable Coastal County

August 26, 2024



Living near California's beautiful coastline is simply too far out of reach for most homebuyers.

According to January 2024 data from the California Association of Realtors (CAR), the median single-family home price is over \$1 million in the San Francisco Bay Area, Santa Barbara County, Santa Cruz County and Orange County, and just shy of a million bucks in San Diego. However, home prices in one of the Golden State's most beautiful coastal counties is still surprisingly cheap by comparison.

The sand, surf and sunsets often come at a steep cost with home prices soaring into the seven digits in many communities.

Nestled at the very top of California is the appropriately named Del Norte County where the median price of a home is just \$295,000, second lowest in the State behind (inland) Lassen County (\$229,000).

Tourism officials tout Del Norte County's towering redwoods, rugged seaside cliffs, picturesque lighthouses and endless adventures in hiking, camping and whitewater rafting.

The message on its marketing website is that "(This) is a place for spirited independence where we encourage entertaining yourself and getting lost in wonder as part of the journey."

The coastal, yet rural lifestyle might not be for everyone. The county has just one incorporated City, Crescent City, where you can find homes just blocks from the ocean in the \$200,000-\$300,000 range, according to Zillow.

The "Living Wage" needed to support a family of four in Del Norte County is \$39.47 per hour, or \$82,097 per year based on MIT's calculations, far less than it's Coastal counterparts to the south.

For comparison, in Santa Barbara County, where the median home price is \$1.28 million, the living wage of a family of four is \$54.08 per hour, or \$112,486 per year. In Santa Cruz County, it's \$64.15 per hour (\$133,432/ year).

Also located in the northwestern part of California, Humboldt and Mendocino counties still have median home prices below \$500,000, according to CAR.

If you want to live anywhere in the Coastal San Francisco Bay Area, along the Central Coast, or in SoCal, you'll have trouble finding homes for less than \$800,000.

While home prices in Del Norte County might still be affordable, this doesn't mean prices for everything else are cheaper. Regular unleaded gas, for example, is currently \$5.17 per gallon, 30 cents above the state average, according to AAA.