

## Asilomar is not all that expensive compared to other alternatives!

For 4 nights and 5 days: Off site: \$842* Asilomar: \$755 **
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\* *Conservative estimate for accommodation, meals, transport and taxes*

\*\* *Least expensive alternative, all inclusive accommodation, meals, taxes (no tips)*

### Concern about accommodation costs

This is a personal note from Pille Bunnell, conference co-organizer

Several people have expressed concerns about the apparently high cost of accommodations on the Asilomar site. The lump sum payment to Asilomar does appear a little daunting. However some simple math shows that compared to other options (other than living nearby or staying with friends) it is actually pretty reasonable.

Part of the concern is that we are often not aware of how quickly a series of expenditures adds up when we are travelling. What we pay ahead of time we attribute to the conference cost, and what we pay piecemeal on site we may not note until afterwards. I know I am always surprised at my VISA bill, when it seemed to me that all I did was buy some groceries and maybe a book.

I invite you to consider a few things:

If your alternative is staying nearby in a motel, you should know that this is a highly-priced area and a popular holiday destination. I've checked on the Internet for motels in the area. The economy ones charge a minimum of \$300 for the 4 nights, before taxes. The California taxes for occupancy are 10% in that area, plus 8.25% sales tax, and \$1.00/night tourism surcharge; thus you would actually be paying about \$356. Furthermore, when I checked in mid April, the economy motels were already almost fully booked for the conference dates. Furthermore, our man on the spot, Lance Nizami, notes that you should expect more like \$125-250 a night for accommodations on the Monterey Peninsula.

You may choose to eat lunch on site, but other meals elsewhere. On site lunch costs \$17.31 (which we need to order at least two weeks ahead) – a good deal if you compare it to other eateries in the area where lunch can set you back \$30. Add a small breakfast at \$10 and a dinner at \$25 (again, Lance tells me a very conservative estimate indeed) plus taxes and tips, and you're looking at around \$65 per day which is \$325 for 5 days of meals (as you would be getting for the Asilomar fee which also includes all taxes, and tips are not expected). People don't notice how meals add up when they are away, as it dribbles out and isn't a "huge" single cost.

Finally, if you are staying off site there is transportation to consider. Asilomar is somewhat isolated from any other accommodations, hence its peaceful charm. So, unless you have your own vehicle you will probably need a rental car if you stay off site. Rentalcars run to about \$40.00 per day for a 4-day rental, before the typical slew of surcharges imposed by the rental, hence a total more like \$65 per day. Throw an extra day to get there and depart, and you would be looking at \$325 total. Assuming that you would split this with someone –you would be paying a minimum of \$162.00 for a vehicle. (Public transport is not really an option for this site.)

Then on top of all this you will have to pay Asilomar\$40 for the necessary day passes.

If you add all this together you have accumulated a bill of some \$843, which is more than the all inclusive Asilomar price of \$755 for a historic single room with all meals, taxes included, and no tips needed. Furthermore, by staying at Asilomar you have the convenience of being on site with far more opportunity for conversation with other participants.

Sincerely  
Pille