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YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE PARKS

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John Mead, President, Adventure 16, in Sequoia National Park



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Southern California has some of the most diverse geography on earth and offers the ideal climate for exploring it year-round. There are not many places where you can snowshoe or ski in the morning, rock climb in the desert in the afternoon and end the day with a run on the beach or a swim in the ocean.

At Adventure 16 we've been a part of the So Cal outdoor exploration culture for over 50 years. We're delighted to have the opportunity to share some of our favorite places by teaming up with the folks at American Park Network to bring you this Oh Ranger! Trails Less Traveled guide, focused specifically on our own backyard.

Whether you're visiting this region for the first time, or you know the So Cal backcountry better than the back of your hand, we hope you look to Adventure 16 and our four local mountain shops for inspiration, friendly expert information, and the highest quality, most reliable outdoor gear and clothing available.

When you drop by any of our stores, I encourage you to check out the many other American Park Network guides we offer as well. The guides are FREE and the places they help take you to are priceless.

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John D. Mead, President
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Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
MARK J. SAFERSTEIN

Associate Publisher & Executive Editor
Joel S. Saferstein

Group Sales & Partnerships Director
Alex Frenkel

EDITORIAL / PRODUCTION
Editors: Monette A. Bailey, Jacqueline Kehoe, Amanda McConnon, Julie McCool, Danielle Taylor
Proofreader: Scott Tabor
Production Manager: Mario Arce
Graphic Designers: Karla Aldana, Dennisse Cruz, Tatiana Hurtado, Yamileth Recinos

DIGITAL
Technology Manager: Scott Falconer

ADVERTISING SALES & MARKETING
(212) 581-3380

adsales@americanparknetwork.com
Business Development: Randy Burton, Mary Pat Kalth, Pat Keane, Craig King, Kristi Rummel
Operations Manager: Matthew Price

American Park Network
41 East 11th Street, 11th Floor, NY, NY 10003



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Distribution requests
distribution@americanparknetwork.com

Oh, Ranger! Wi-Fi™ installation/sponsorship
wifi@americanparknetwork.com

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Cover: Star trails at Joshua Tree National Park, iStock

For answers to all your questions, go to OhRanger.com



WHAT'S NEW! WE'RE ALL CONNECTED

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

—John Muir



Mark, Joel & Alex – connecting in parks!

As a young man, John Muir, the naturalist known as, "Father of the National Parks," had an accident that left him temporarily blinded. It changed his life forever. When he regained his sight, he emerged into the light ever-determined to pursue his dreams of exploration. Fortunately for the world, Muir's trials led him to help move Congress to set aside Yosemite, one of his many contributions to our nation's preservation movement.

When faced with adversity, we have but two choices. We can either rise above our circumstance or succumb to our demons of doubt, fear, resentment and apathy. While Muir was lucky to have his sight return, his subsequent efforts drew strength from hope, compassion, kindness and love to rise up from personal adversity.

Lately, it feels like we're all dealing with too many hurdles. Every hour, "breaking" news spews forth accounts of tragedy and divisiveness. It was with this backdrop that I was preparing to teach a restorative yoga class, to create a safe environment for my students and provide an hour's worth of peace and quiet to carry out into the world. What theme would capture their imagination and neatly underscore our human need for connectedness?

When teaching, I try to use examples that marry ancient tradition with contemporary

science. I often find inspiration in parks. In its traditional form, yoga was about joining with the collective universe. So, too, is Muir's quote, best illustrated by an example from Yellowstone. When wolves were reintroduced there after a 70-year absence, the rampant elk population could no longer leisurely nibble on willows, graze in open meadows or congregate by the rivers. In a short period of time, the forests and meadows began to regenerate. Song birds appeared. Beavers flourished, building dams, which created habitats for otters, muskrats and ducks. Cooler waters, shaded by more trees, attracted different species of amphibians and fish. Tree roots stabilized the river banks, diminished erosion and even changed the geography of the park! Indeed, pick out anything by itself and we quickly find that *everything* is connected.

Now is the time to seek out connection—whether in a park, a yoga studio or anywhere you find inspiration—to find strength to rise up and overcome the obstacles that face us all...

mark@americanparknetwork.com



GET CONNECTED AT YOUR FAVORITE PARKS!

Parks are about enjoying nature, but what if you want to share a great picture or are awaiting an important email? If you're looking to add connectivity to your park, or if you already have Wi-Fi and would like help adding content or generating sponsor revenues, please let us know at wifi@americanparknetwork.com.



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AT A GLANCE

For outdoor enthusiasts, Southern California is the perfect playground. Hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, rock climbing, skiing, kayaking and just about any other activity you might crave are right around the bend. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Mojave Desert on the other, outdoor spaces make up the heart and soul of the region. These public lands, located in one of the nation's most populous areas, provide the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

WHO'S WHO

As you travel throughout Southern California, there are several organizations that are dedicated to making your experience a memorable and safe one.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)

The NPS is the federal custodian of several public lands in the region. As an agency of the Department of the Interior, the NPS has the

responsibility of preserving and protecting the natural and cultural assets of national parks and providing for the parks' public use and enjoyment. For more information visit nps.gov or call the Pacific West regional office at **(415) 623-2100**.

US FOREST SERVICE (USFS)

Southern California is home to a number of national forests, many of which are featured in this guide, including San Bernardino, Los Padres and Angeles. All are managed, protected and maintained by the USFS. For information, please call **(800) 832-1355** or visit fs.fed.us.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS)

The USFWS is the government organization dedicated to the protection, conservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. The organization has a hand in implementing laws that affect areas in



FEDERAL RECREATIONAL LANDS PASSES

A federal recreation pass is helpful if you plan to visit many national parks, forests or other federal lands. For information, call **(888) 275-8747** or visit store.usgs.gov/pass.

| Type | Cost | Availability | Details |
|----------------|------|---|---|
| Annual Pass | \$80 | General Public | This one-year pass is available on site, by phone or online (see above). |
| Senior Pass | \$80 | U.S. residents age 62+ | This lifetime pass is available on site, online or via mail order. ID required. |
| Military Pass | Free | Active U.S. military members and dependents | This one-year pass is available on site. ID (CAC Card or DoD Form 1173) required. |
| Access Pass | Free | U.S. residents with permanent disabilities | This lifetime pass is available on site or via mail order. ID and documentation required. |
| Volunteer Pass | Free | 250 cumulative volunteer service hours | Inquire locally to obtain information about this one-year pass. |

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CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS PASSES

Passes issued by the California Department of Parks and Recreation are a great way for frequent visitors to save money when visiting California State Parks. Passes can be ordered online at store.parks.ca.gov.

| Pass | Description | Cost |
|---|---|-------|
| California Explorer Annual Day Use Pass | This pass grants entry for one year at most state parks where a vehicle day use fee is collected. (Not valid at OHV parks). | \$195 |
| Golden Poppy Annual Day Use Pass | This pass is a great value for visitors of inland, northern and reservoir parks. The pass grants free parking for one year and is honored at 112 selected parks that charge a day-use parking fee. | \$125 |
| Annual Boat Use Pass | This pass is a small sticker placed on the Annual Day Use or Golden Poppy Day Use pass. The pass waives boat launching fees for motorized vessels, sailboats over 8 feet or personal watercraft. One sticker covers one boat. | \$100 |
| Off-Highway Vehicle Day Use Pass | This pass grants unlimited access to California State Park vehicular recreation areas. The pass is valid for 12 months from the date of purchase. | \$50 |

Southern California including the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act. For more information call **(800) 344-WILD** or visit fws.gov.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The California Department of Parks and Recreation manages 280 park units across the state. These parks contain the finest and most diverse collection of natural, cultural and recreational resources found within California. The department’s mission is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. For more information call **(800) 777-0369** or visit parks.ca.gov.

OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLE RECREATION DIVISION

The California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program was created in 1971 out of the critical need to better manage growing demands for off-highway recreation, while at the same time foster respect for private property rights and protect California’s natural and cultural resources. Today, this program is the largest and most successful program of its type in the U.S., and continues to fulfil its commitment to providing safe, enjoyable recreation while balancing the need to protect the state’s resources. For more information call **(916) 324-4442** or visit ohv.parks.ca.gov.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION

California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) is the only statewide independent nonprofit organization dedicated to

protecting, enhancing and advocating for California’s magnificent state parks. Since 1969, California State Parks Foundation has raised more than \$256 million to benefit state parks. California State Parks Foundation is committed to improving the quality of life for all Californians by expanding access to the natural beauty, rich culture and history, and recreational and educational opportunities offered by California’s state parks. For more information and to learn ways that you can get involved please call **(415) 262-4400** or visit calparks.org.

SAFETY & REGULATIONS

Please abide by the following regulations and safety tips, which are in place to help protect the parks, wildlife and

you, the visitor. During your visit please follow Leave No Trace principles (see the “Preservation” chapter for more information).

Camping: Do not dig into or level the ground as archaeological resources could be disturbed or erosion initiated.

Driving: Observe posted speed limits while driving. Watch for turns. Be especially alert for animals crossing the road.

Firearms: Regulations vary by park. Check with the park you plan to visit before your trip for more information.

Fires: Wood fires are permitted only in existing fireplaces at campgrounds and established picnic grounds. Use wood from inside the park or local sources.

Insects: To reduce your risk of being



California’s lands contain the finest and most diverse collection of natural resources and species, such as the Joshua Tree, found only in the Mojave Desert.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| California State Parks | (916) 653-6995 • parks.ca.gov |
| Fishing & Hunting | (916) 445-0411 • dfg.ca.gov |
| Office of Tourism | (916) 444-4429 • visitcalifornia.com |
| Highway Patrol/Road Conditions | (800) 427-7623 • dot.ca.gov |
| Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division | (916) 324-4442 • ohv.parks.ca.gov |
| FEDERAL PARKS & RECREATION | |
| U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | (800) 344-WILD • fws.gov |
| National Park Service | (202) 208-6843 • nps.gov |
| US Forest Service | (800) 832-1355 • fs.fed.us/info |
| Federal Recreation & Reservations | (888) 448-1474 • recreation.gov |
| U.S. Bureau of Land Management | (202) 208-3801 • blm.gov |
| Emergencies | 911 |

bitten by ticks, which are active year-round, stay on trails and avoid grassy, bushy areas.

Off Highway Vehicles: OHV rules vary by park. Contact the park before your visit to find out if OHV use is permitted.

Valuables: Don't leave valuables in your car. They are an easy target in a locked or unlocked vehicle.

Vandalism: Please take only pictures and memories home with you. Do not deface, destroy or remove flowers, trees, shrubs, rocks or historical objects.

Wildlife: Feeding, petting or harassing wildlife is prohibited. Animals may seem tame, but they are wild and can hurt you and themselves if you are too close.

DESERT SAFETY TIPS

Most of Southern California's public lands are in a desert type environment. For safety and maximum enjoyment, follow these tips when exploring the desert.

Planning: Planning before you depart is critical for having a safe trip. Know where you are going, who you are going with, and when you will return.

Water: Always carry extra water with you, whether you are driving, hiking, biking or riding. Desert heat can lead to dangerous dehydration very rapidly. If you become stranded, conserve your water by traveling at night or during the cooler times of the day and resting in the shade during the hottest periods.

Most people need at least two gallons of water per day in the summer heat. It is a good idea to always keep a few gallons of extra water in your vehicle regardless of the weather or time of year.

Clothing: Take appropriate clothing with you for the full range of possible weather conditions that you may encounter on your trip. In the desert, temperatures can vary up to 50°F between day and night. Refer to the "Essential Gear" sidebars in this guide for product ideas to help you prepare for a So Cal adventure.

WHAT'S YOUR GO TO PARK IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA? TELL US! @OhRanger



PRESERVATION

The 2018 wildfires left lasting damage to some of the parks in this guide; the Santa Monica Mountains in particular were hit hard by the Woolsey Fire. Heavy rains in the winter of 2018 also caused erosional damage to some parks. Still, Southern California remains home to some of the most scenic hiking and all-out fun outdoor recreation in the country. **Visitors should check with the parks about current camping, trail and area conditions and closures before setting out on their adventures.**

Southern California is one of the most populous and rapidly growing regions of the county. The area's public lands pose unique challenges for conservationists, who must balance the public's use with protecting natural and cultural assets. Although laws protect some habitats, animals and plants, there are several endangered species in Southern California, including the California condor and arroyo toad. Air pollution, invasive species and fires are just a few of the many threats to this fragile ecosystem.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Leave No Trace is a national program that teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly, and promotes and inspires proper stewardship of America's public lands. Many land management agencies are cooperating partners in this program. You can help minimize impacts to the natural resources and social experiences of other visitors by practicing these seven principles. For more information, please visit LNT.org.

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.

Consider applying these principles during your travels. We always need your help in preserving our shared lands for future generations. It is the most important thing you can do for the places you love. Make the commitment to Leave No Trace today. You can make a difference.

AIR POLLUTION

Winds carry pollution from industrial centers like Los Angeles and San Diego to remote locations very quickly. Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emitted by power plants and cars react with other molecules to form sulfates and nitrates, resulting in acid rain. For more information on air quality and monitoring stations, visit the South Coast Air Quality Management District at aqmd.gov.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Fountain grass, giant reed or arundo, Russian thistle and salt cedar are a few examples of non-native species that disrupt native ecosystems. The arundo is especially problematic as it can grow up to four inches a day, and quickly grows so thick and dense that native plants and animals are forced out. Planting native plants, cleaning off all boating and fishing gear to prevent aquatic hitchhikers and educating yourself about the threats invasive plants pose are a few of the ways you can help. For more information, please visit the Invasive Species Program of California Department of Fish and Game at wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/invasives.

FIRE CONTROL

Fires are a real and often necessary part of the Southern California ecosystem; however, uncontrolled and preventable fires can cause significant damage. When camping, follow posted fire and safety rules—and make sure to build fires in existing fire pits at campgrounds and picnic grounds. To learn more about California’s Department of Forestry and Fire Protection visit fire.ca.gov.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Get involved at Southern California’s state and national parks and other public lands. Many parks utilize volunteers to help with park operations, natural resource management and public safety. Contact your local park or request a volunteer application packet from California State Parks. Call **(916) 653-9069** or email volunteer.inparksprogram@parks.ca.gov.

GET INVOLVED

Access Fund is a national association that protects and maintains U.S. climbing areas, keeping them open and safe, while conserving the climbing environment. **(303) 545-6772 • accessfund.org**

Donate-A-Pack Foundation: Gifts backpacks and gear to help at-risk, low income or disabled youth partake in outdoor experiences. **(619) 283-2362 • donateapack.org**

PCTA Trail Gorillas: Maintains the southernmost 700 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. **(916) 285-1838 • pcta.org/volunteer**

Outdoor Outreach: Empowers underprivileged youth through access to the outdoors. **(619) 238-5790 • outdooroutreach.org**

San Diego Friends of Parks and Recreation Foundation: Protects and raises funds for San Diego’s park facilities. **(619) 525-8213 • sandiego.gov**



HIKING

Southern California encompasses a wide range of wilderness in such a small area, with great trails of all varieties never more than a couple of hours away. From shoreline strolls to majestic mountain peaks, there’s something for all abilities and tastes.

CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK

Just 40 miles east of San Diego lies 24,700-acre Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. In 2003, the largest wildfire in California’s history, before the 2018 Thomas Fire, engulfed 90 percent of the park. Today, the land abounds with wildflowers, oak and conifer forest, and sweeping meadows split by streams.

Over 100 miles of trails await visitors. The trip up Lookout Fire Road to the 6,512-foot **Cuyamaca Peak** is three-and-a-half miles commencing from the Paso Picacho campsite. The second highest peak in San Diego County offers a panoramic view including Anza-Borrego Desert to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Salton Sea, Lake Cuyamaca and the Mexican border. **Stonewall Peak**, 5,700 feet, is a two mile hike consisting of switchbacks. From the top, hikers can enjoy a view of an abandoned mine. During the late 1800s, workers excavated upwards of 1,000 pounds of gold per year there.

Named for Cuyamaca’s first park ranger, the **Harvey Moore Trail** begins north of Green Valley near the Sweetwater River Bridge. The park’s recovery process is on full display along its approximate eight miles. It contains an elevation gain of 1,000 feet.

Cuyamaca can get very hot in the summer, making spring and fall the best

times to visit. Some trails are open to mountain biking and horseback riding in addition to hiking.

Getting There: Julian, CA • **(760) 765-3023 • parks.ca.gov**

CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST—PALOMAR RANGER DISTRICT

The southernmost national forest in California, Cleveland National Forest spans 460,000 acres. President Theodore Roosevelt made the forest an official public land on July 1, 1908. Cleveland National Forest is split into three major districts: Palomar, Trabuco and Descanso.

Mount Palomar is the highest point in the Palomar Ranger District. At the “**High Point**” of the mountain, a tower offers visitors a panoramic view of the area at 6,140 feet. The High Point can be reached by a trail starting at the Oak Grove Fire Station. The trail is a 14-mile difficult trek. Wildflowers and wildlife are abundant along the trail and the view from the top is a majestic sight featuring Mounts San Jacinto and San Geronio to the north, the Santa Rosa mountains to the east and the Aqua Tibia mountains to the west. Visitors can also catch a glimpse of the famous **Palomar Observatory**; however, no trail connects the High Point and the observatory.

To visit the observatory, take the **Observatory Trail**, a 4.4-mile round trip trek that begins from the Observatory Campground. Hikers will reach 5,500 feet while passing through pine and oak woodlands. Wonderful views of Mendenhall and French valleys can be seen along the trail. The observatory is open to visitors 363 days a year, closed only on December 24 and 25 and occasional maintenance. Self-guided tours are

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available daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., extended to 3:30 p.m. during daylight-savings time. Guided tours are offered during weekends from April to October.

The **Cutca Trail** is 10.4 miles taking hikers through meadows and to the 4,730-foot **Eagle Crag**. Wildlife along the trail include mule deer, snakes and golden eagles. Mountain lions and snakes are also common in the area; use caution and be aware of your surroundings.

Getting There: Ramona, CA • (760) 788-0250 • www.fs.usda.gov/cleveland

BACKBONE TRAIL

The **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area** is a sprawling amalgamation of state parks and other public lands in the Santa Monica Mountains, just up the coast from the

city of Los Angeles. The 67-mile-long Backbone Trail binds the parks together, from Point Mugu State Park near Oxnard to Will Rogers State Historic Park outside of Santa Monica.

Construction of the Backbone Trail began in the 1980s, cutting through the recreation area's 150,000 acres of mountain ridges, dense chaparral and oak woods. The highest point, Sandstone Peak stands at 3,111 feet. Today, the trail offers hikers unparalleled views of the Santa Monica Mountains, sweeping inland valleys and the deep-blue Pacific Ocean.

Trailheads, often at parking areas and campgrounds in the recreational area's various parks, divide the Backbone into day-hike-sized segments, and the trail is an excellent backpacking route too. Each section, though all part of the Santa Monicas, has its own unique features. At one end, in **Point Mugu**, the trail starts near the beach and climbs up river canyons. The **Malibu Creek State Park** section, the one-time home of "M*A*S*H" and "The Planet of the Apes," is a jagged jumble of rock outcroppings beside deep gorges. **Will Rogers State Park** caps the trail's other end with ranchland overlooking the Pacific.

The Backbone Trail sections aren't loops, so allot enough time to double back, or arrange a pickup. Check with individual parks within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area for campsite availability and reservations.

Getting There: Thousand Oaks, CA • (805) 370-2301 • nps.gov/samo

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

Los Angeles' backyard forest encompasses over 700,000 acres of land. There are 557 miles of hiking and equestrian

V.T. Polywoda/Flickr



The 67-mile-long Backbone Trail binds the parks together, from Point Mugu State Park near Oxnard to Will Rogers State Historic Park outside of Santa Monica.

trails that include 176 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail.

The 60-foot **Sturtevant Falls** are a popular hiking destination. Beginning from Chantry Flats picnic site, the 3.25-mile hike to Sturtevant travels to the **Roberts Camp** and along the Gabrielino Trail. Rock hopping to traverse creeks is required at some areas. To add to the hike, descend into the **Santa Anita Canyon** from Roberts camp to visit the less-popular **Hermit Falls**.

The **Santa-Anita Canyon Loop** is another option to extending the relatively short hike to Sturtevant. The loop is 9.5 miles and takes hikers past Sturtevant Falls, Hoeges Camp and Mount Zion.

At 6,161 feet, **San Gabriel Peak** is the highest of the Front Range of the San Gabriels in Angeles National Forest. The hike to the peak is about four miles round trip. The peak and ascent offer views of many mountains in the range including Mount

Lowe, Mount Wilson and Mount Baldy looming in the distance. On a clear day, Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean may be seen.

Mount Disappointment is an easy detour as hikers reach a saddle between the two peaks on the hike leading from the trailhead off of Mount Wilson Road. The mountain was dubbed "Disappointment" after surveyors reached its peak, thinking it was the highest in the range, only to see San Gabriel looming almost 200 feet higher to the south. Disappointment features a rounded top with radio towers and an abandoned Nike missile site.

Getting There: Arcadia, CA • (626) 574-1613 • www.fs.usda.gov/angeles.

ESSENTIAL GEAR

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BACKPACKING

For backpackers, Southern California’s parks and public lands hit all the critical check boxes: rugged trails, remote campsites and breathtaking landscapes. The vast wildernesses offer enough trails to occupy you for weeks—and even then, there will still be more to explore!

LAGUNA MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

One of the longest continuous trails in the United States, the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) stretches from Canada to Mexico, crossing through Washington, Oregon and California. Forty miles east of San Diego, the trail passes through Cleveland National Forest’s Laguna Mountain Recreation Area, where low desert transitions to towering mountains covered in conifer forest.

This section of the PCT follows the eastern escarpment of the Laguna Mountains. The non-looped, 10.5-mile piece overlooks the dry, rocky lands to the east that border Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The Desert View Picnic Area, near the village of Mount Laguna, offers awe-inspiring, mid-hike views from nearly 6,000 feet. The trail segment in the recreation area ends at Kwaaymii Point, with its expansive eastern views of the desert landscape.

The hike is fairly easy, with little elevation gain as it cuts through black oaks and Jeffrey pines. Potable water is available along or just off the trail at a handful of locations. Hikers are welcome to use the Burnt Rancheria Campground, not far from the trail’s start, or the Laguna Campground about halfway through the hike. The campgrounds aren’t



One of the longest continuous trails in the United States, the Pacific Crest Trail runs from Canada to Mexico, including the entire length of California.

Shutterstock

“This experience has changed me forever.”



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[THESCA.ORG](https://www.THESCA.ORG)



Americique

At 11,502 feet, Mount San Gorgonio boasts one of the highest peaks in California.

particularly remote—any place with showers can't be far from civilization—but the forested sites offer privacy. Guests can reserve approximately half of each campground's sites; the rest are available first come, first-served. The San Diego State Observatory sponsors "star parties" for campers on Forest Service Campgrounds in Laguna Mountain.

Getting There: Mount Laguna, CA • (619) 445-6235 • fs.usda.gov/cleveland or pcta.org

CATALINA ISLAND

Just 22 miles off the Los Angeles coast lies Catalina Island, a member of the **Channel Islands**. The 76-square-mile island is home to just two towns: Avalon and Two Harbors. The **Trans-Catalina Trail**, which crosses the entire island, offers backpackers the chance to feel the full effect of the 43,000-acre-wilderness interior of the island. Running from **Renton Mine Trailhead** on the island's east side to **Starlight Beach** on the west,

the trail covers 37.2 miles. Five campgrounds separate the trail into sections, though backcountry camping is not available.

Along the way, hikers will see marvelous views of beaches and ocean overlooks from mountain ridges. In the spring, bright wildflowers sprout up and veil the hillsides. A herd of approximately 150 bison inhabit the island. They were supposedly introduced in 1924 by a crew shooting a silent film on the island, though neither Catalina Island nor the bison seem to appear in the film. It is not uncommon for hikers to encounter bison on their travels. Bald eagles can also be seen soaring overhead. Before setting out on the trail, hikers are required to obtain a hiking permit and can do so from various points on the island. Visit the **Catalina Island Conservancy** website for more information on campground reservations. Catalina Island can only be accessed by sea or air. The conservancy can provide more information about transportation, as well as tips for hiking the trail.

Getting There: Avalon, CA • (310) 510-1520 • catalinachamber.com • catalinaconservancy.org.

SESPE WILDERNESS

Just 75 miles from Los Angeles, 219,468 undeveloped acres await adventurers at the Sespe Wilderness Area in Los Padres National Forest. Hikers seeking solitude will find it as they become engulfed in the chaparral scrub, pine forest and sandstone cliffs of one of the nation's largest roadless areas. The last remaining undammed river in Southern California, Sespe Creek, cuts through the wilderness.

The area offers more than 130 miles of hiking trails along creeks, over rivers and among wooded slopes. The Sespe Hot Springs are a popular destination and can

be reached from multiple trails. The springs can be as hot as 190°F; buckets of runoff can cool the pools. The scenery often includes bighorn sheep grazing nearby. To reach the springs, take the 17.5-mile Sespe River Trail, a one-way trip commencing from the Piedra Blanca Trailhead. Along it, hikers will make 10 river crossings, pass multiple deep swimming holes and an assortment of camping options. Camping near Willett Hot Springs, 9.8 miles down the trail, is a popular option.

The 18-mile Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trail offers a sampling of rock formations. Hikers clamber up white sandstone to a summit offering wonderful views of the wilderness.

A few campgrounds require a National Forest Adventure Pass, the rest are non-fee sites requiring only a campfire permit. Contact the Ojai Ranger District to plan an adventure and determine the type of permit or pass a trip will require.

Getting There: Ojai, Ca • (805) 646-4348 • fs.usda.gov/lpnf.

SAN GORGONIO WILDERNESS AREA

Located just 10 miles northwest of Palm Springs, the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area in San Bernardino National Forest offers more than 100 miles of hiking trails. Mount San Gorgonio is the highlight of the area—its 11,502-foot peak is the highest in California south of the Sierra Nevadas.

Two of the most popular trails to the summit are Vivian Creek and South Fork trails. At 17.2 miles, Vivian Creek is the shortest and steepest route to the summit. The trail offers dynamic views of Yucaipa Ridge and Galena Peak. South Fork is a 23.2-mile trek. Both trails are strenuous with steep climbs and nearly 5,000 feet of elevation gain. Visitors are treated to

sweeping views of the surrounding peaks, the city of Los Angeles and the Mojave Desert at the summit.

The Aspen Grove Trail provides hikers a unique opportunity to explore a small remnant grove of Quaking Aspens, which are incredibly rare in California.

Though the trail is relatively short at 1.5 miles, it connects with the Fish Creek Trail and is a third option for hikers looking to summit San Gorgonio.

Free permits are required to camp and campfires are illegal. Forest officials ask that visitors camp at least 200 feet from springs, streams, trails and other occupied sites.

Getting There: Mill Creek Visitor Center, Mentone, CA • (909) 382-2882 • fs.usda.gov/sbnf

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COOL HIKES FOR HOT DAYS



Adobe Stock

Head to the beach on the trails at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve

Summer in Southern California can get hot, but that doesn't have to keep you from appreciating the great outdoors!

From breezy beach hikes to cool mountaintops with panoramic views, here are just a few of our favorite spots for beating the summer heat.

Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve offers breezy trails that wind through native vegetation before leading down to the beach. The reserve is located between La Jolla and Del Mar, just a short drive north from San Diego.

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is home to a cascading waterfall and year-round stream, as well as giant California live oaks and groves of majestic sycamore trees. Located north of San Diego, the

preserve lies between Rancho Peñasquitos and Sorrento Hills to the north and Mira Mesa to the south.

The **San Gabriel Mountains** offer swimming holes and cooler temperatures at high altitude. For a day trip, hike from Bear Canyon to Switzer Falls. Although you won't find solitude, this easy 4.5-mile shaded out-and-back trail meanders to a 50-foot waterfall and swimming hole.

For a longer hike, continue up Bear Canyon for another couple of miles to Bear Camp. The trailhead is located off of Highway 2 near Pasadena.

The **Santa Monica Mountains** are a great place to escape the heat of Los Angeles. Head to Escondido Falls in Malibu for an adventure through oak woodland and Coastal sage scrub to a three-tiered, 150-foot waterfall (the highest in the Santa Monica Mountains).

A mile into the trail you will reach the lower tier of the waterfall. The trail to the second and third falls is steep and narrow and requires climbing and bouldering. The trailhead is located on Winding Way in Malibu.

Cabrillo National Monument offers cool breezes, ocean bluffs, tidepools and views of the Pacific Ocean. Check out the Bayside Trail for a breezy, two-and-a-half-mile out-and-back hike that begins at the Old Point Loma Lighthouse (built in 1854) and winds past panoramic views of San Diego Harbor, through one of the last remaining remnants of coastal sage scrub habitat in the world. The monument is located in San Diego.

For **more great hike suggestions**, please visit Adventure16.com.



CLIMBING

The early stomping ground of many of America's climbing luminaries, Southern California's boulders, rock formations and crags are as famous for their quality as for the legends who climbed them. Great weather and stunning vistas attract world-class climbers year-round.

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

One hundred forty miles east of Los Angeles sits the massive 800,000-acre Joshua Tree National Park. The park offers a variety of recreation opportunities, but is particularly renowned for its wide variety of climbing routes. With more than 400 distinct rock formations and 8,000-plus routes, Joshua Tree attracts hundreds of climbers to its mild climate on popular weekends. The rock is sheer monzogranite: a coarse granite that offers high friction for climbers. Many of the formations within the park are rounded with weathered domes. World-class climbers and beginners alike come to Joshua Tree for its unique opportunities and wide range

of routes. Along with its many pitches, the park also has terrific bouldering problems.

Wonderland of Rocks, Hidden Valley Campground and Real Hidden Valley are three of the most popular areas to climb in the park. Each area features more than 200 climbing routes, with the Wonderland of Rocks leading the group with the most routes. Highlights include: *Mental Physics*, *Solid Gold* and *Figures on a Landscape*. The *White Rastafarian Boulder* has some of the most popular boulders in the park.

Make reservations online at recreation.gov or call (877) 444-6777 for certain sites; however, most sites are available on a first come, first-served basis. Backcountry permits are available at backcountry registration boards throughout the park. Most of the park does not have running water, so be sure to bring enough, whether only climbing for a day or staying in the park for an extended time.

Getting There: Joshua Tree, CA • (760) 367-5500 • nps.gov/jotr

HOLCOMB VALLEY

The Holcomb Valley Pinnacles, north of Big Bear Lake in **San Bernardino National Forest**, peek out from the juniper, pine and fir forest that covers the high San Bernardino Mountains. Popular in summer but usually climbable year-round, Holcomb's granite crags start at an elevation of 7,500 feet. Many of the pitches rise nearly 100 feet, culminating in spectacular views of the mountains that encircle the valley below.

Popular with sport climbers, the Holcomb Valley Pinnacles are flush with moderately difficult routes—more than 200 in all. The **Central Pinnacles** contain the majority of Holcomb's climbs, mostly in a concentrated

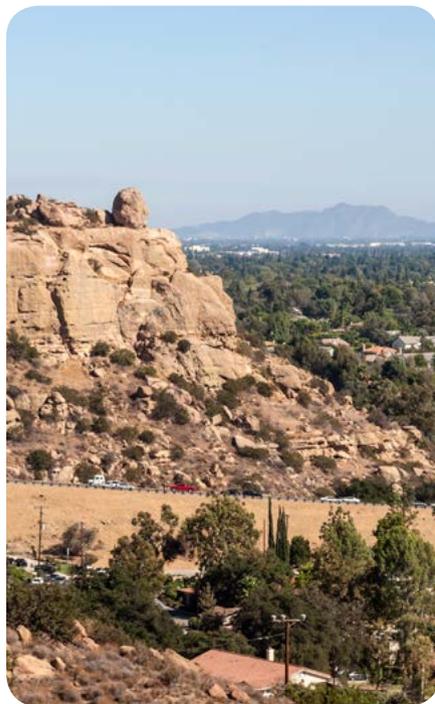


ESSENTIAL GEAR

HARNESS

The **Petzl Corax Kit** offers a versatile, easy to-use, super-comfortable harness for beginners or those wanting to progress in climbing, mountaineering, or via ferrata. The kit also includes other high-quality Petzl gear: belay/rappel device, locking carabiner, chalk bag, and chalk. Package sizes based on harness size.





trekandshoot/Stock

National Forest today, with thousands of claims by hobbyists.

Getting There: Fawnskin, CA •
(909) 382-2790 • fs.usda.gov/sbnf

STONEY POINT PARK

Stoney Point Park, with all its history, sits 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. The 76-acre city park is one of the oldest and most esteemed bouldering areas in the country. In addition to bouldering problems, the park offers top-climbing routes on walls and in canyons. Climbing legends Royal Robbins, Bob Kamps and John Bachar are among the world-class climbers who laid the foundation for their climbing careers at Stoney Point.

The park's sandstone rock is kind to hands and makes for great sessions that can last for hours. Rain, however, affects the sandstone and climbers should wait three to four days after rainfall before climbing to preserve the rock and prevent flaking. Boulders come together to form caves and alcoves to create unique climbing opportunities. Some of popular problems include *Crowd Pleaser*, *Boot Flake* and *Kodas' Corner*. *Nutcracker* and **747** are among the most sought after top-rope routes.

Beginners and veteran climbers come together at Stoney Point to take advantage of the wide range of difficulties available at the park. This makes for an interesting social scene where climbers can engage, observe and learn from one another. Climbers are drawn to Stoney Point year-round, although the summer months can be very hot. Graffiti and litter have become an issue at the park, so please leave behind no litter and help maintain this historical climbing gem for generations of climbers to come.

Getting There: Chatsworth, CA •
(818) 756-8189 • laparks.org

Some of the greatest American climbers got their start at Stoney Point.

area, so approaches are typically very short. Climbers can spend an entire day working their way across a single crag. **Coyote Crag**, with its plentiful holds on single pitches, and **Claim Jumper Wall**, tall and highly featured, are especially popular destinations. To escape the crowds, try the South and West pinnacle areas. **Lost Orbit Rock** in the South Pinnacles boasts dozens of excellent routes up cracks, slabs and varied faces.

Long before it attracted climbers, Holcomb Valley was the site of Southern California's largest gold rush. The valley is named for 19th-century gold miner William F. Holcomb, and remnants of the rush litter the valley, from **abandoned mines** to **Hangman's Tree**, all just miles from the Big Bear Ranger Station and the Pinnacles. Prospectors still work in San Bernardino

MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK

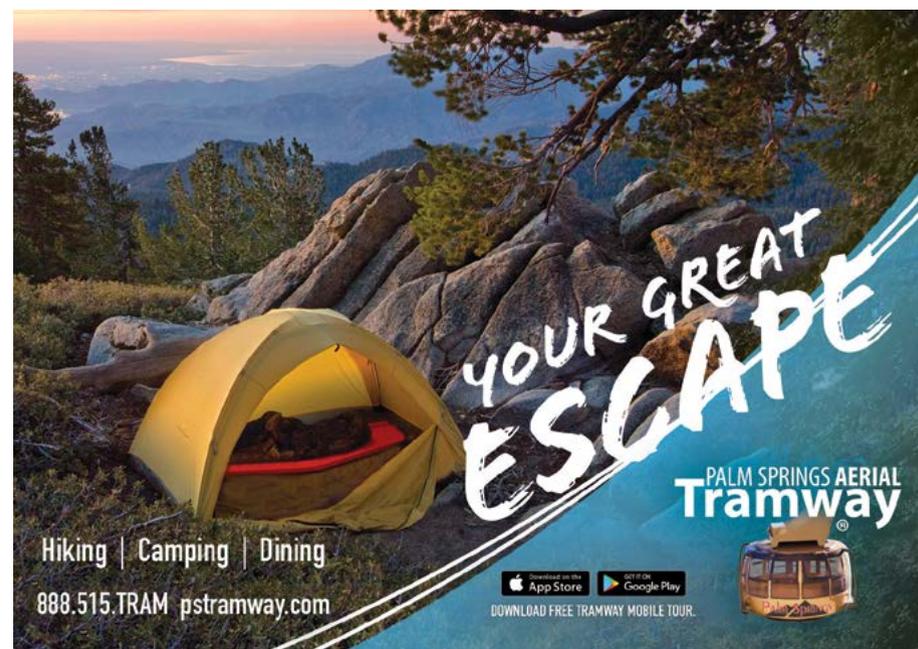
The chance to climb amongst historic Hollywood sets awaits climbers at Malibu Creek. Just 25 miles from downtown Los Angeles, the park spans 8,000 acres. The outdoor set of the legendary television program M*A*S*H was owned by 20th Century Fox between 1946 and 1974. The company used the park's land as a location ranch. Since 2007, restoration work has been done to clean up the former sets and overgrowth in an attempt to restore the land to the condition it was in before filming began to change the areas.

M*A*S*H was not the only famous Hollywood set to be featured in the park. One of the park's main climbing areas received its name from a movie that featured scenes using the area: **Planet of the Apes Wall**. The Planet of the Apes

Wall features almost all overhanging routes. It is a top rope-only wall. The **Ghetto** and **Century Lake Canyon** are two of the park's other popular areas. Volcanic rock is the main variety of rock found at Malibu Creek.

Malibu Creek runs through the park and stretches 13 miles. It is the only creek to cut entirely through the Santa Monica Mountains from north to south. Along the creek lies the 60-foot-long **Rock Pool**, a popular destination for climbers looking to swim or wade in between sessions. There are 10 climbing routes around Rock Pool, all rated from 5.8 to 5.10c, some of which overhang water. Malibu Creek State Park also offers some good bouldering opportunities, including the popular **MASH Boulder** among a number of excellent steep routes.

Getting There: Calabasas, CA
• (818) 880-0367 • parks.ca.gov





KAYAKING

Riddled with sea caves, teeming with sea life and renowned for its picturesque beaches and coves, the Southern California coast is simply perfect for kayaking. Whether you're a first-timer or an expert, paddling on the Pacific is an experience you'll never forget.

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Despite being just 20 miles off the Los Angeles coast, Channel Islands is one of the least visited national parks of our nation's collection. The park consists of five of the eight islands in the Channel Islands chain: Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel and Santa Barbara. Due to the low traffic to the islands, animal and plant species have been able to thrive. Over 2,000 animal and plant species exist in the park and 145 of them can be found

nowhere else on earth. Each island has its own separate sub-species of island fox that is only found on the Channel Islands.

Painted Cave, at Santa Cruz Island, is a popular destination for kayakers. It is one of the world's largest sea caves, spanning 1,215 feet. Santa Cruz's **Scorpion Beach** offers visitors an opportunity to explore sea caves and shoreline cliffs. The world's largest animal, the blue whale, can be seen in the area during summer and fall. Gray whales are present in the winter and common dolphins can be spotted year-round.

Along with kayaking, visitors can **scuba dive or snorkel** to further explore wildlife and kelp forests in the clear waters of the Pacific. Each island also offers **primitive campgrounds** that are a short walk from the water.



Paddle the impossibly blue waters of Channel Islands National Park. Keep an eye out to spot blue or gray whales or dolphins.

Adobe Stock

Kayaking can be done independently or with a park-authorized guide. The National Park Service highly suggests kayaking with a guide, especially for novice and first-time kayakers. For those who own kayaks, private tour-companies can be contacted to transport personal kayaks. Access to the islands is by sea or air only.

Getting There: Ventura, CA
• (805) 658-5730 • nps.gov/chis

SESPE WILDERNESS AREA

Southern California's last remaining undammed river cuts its way through the **Sespe Wilderness of Los Padres National Forest**. **Sespe Creek** runs down a canyon for 31.5 miles with rapids that rival any river in the Sierras. In 1992, the creek was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River. A popular attraction for kayakers, the creek and surrounding forest also offer opportunities to swim, hike, fish and camp.

The trip down the Sespe commences calmly and flows through a sandstone gorge. As the trip continues, though, the rapids begin to pick up. The frothing waters in the middle section lead to exhilarating drops and a steep descent into another gorge. Finally, paddlers reach difficult rapids and a long portage over and around a series of massive boulders.

Kayakers will drop around 2,500 feet in elevation from start to finish on the trip. The Class V rapids along the creek are not for the faint of heart and paddling experience is required. Taking the creek on immediately following rainfall is not recommended as it makes the already difficult trek even harder.

The average trip down the Sespe takes three to five days. Multiple sandbars and beaches throughout the creek offer

great campsites. The early months of the year present the best conditions to run the creek; however, strong flows can sometimes last until May depending on the season's rainfall. By summer, long portages are required.

Getting There: Ojai, CA
• (805) 646-4348 • www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf

ABALONE COVE SHORELINE PARK

Located in the city of Rancho Palos Verdes, 45 minutes from Los Angeles, the park contains two beaches: **Abalone Cove** and **Sacred Cove**. The two are separated by **Portuguese Point**, a bluff that juts into the ocean providing spectacular views. Tidepools along the

ESSENTIAL GEAR

DRY BAG

The **Sea to Summit Hydraulic Dry Pack 120L** is a seriously heavy-duty dry bag boasting fully welded construction and a removable harness that will make portaging a snap. Constructed with abrasion-resistant 600D TPU laminated waterproof fabric that holds up in the most extreme conditions, this large



volume pack delivers in the toughest environments. Its easily removable and adjustable harness is designed to be comfortable and quick drying. This pack works great to carry large amounts of bulky gear during multi-day trips on the water.

beach near the point offer visitors a unique opportunity to see marine life like starfish and urchins. The park is a State Ecological Preserve, so removal of marine life is prohibited.

The trip between Abalone Cove to **Malaga Cove**, in Palos Verdes Estates, is popular for ocean kayakers. In total, the trip is approximately 8.3 miles and can take kayakers around three hours to complete. Though it is difficult, those that take the journey are treated to wonderful views of the peninsula, the Pacific Ocean and **Catalina Island**.

For a less strenuous option, the trip to **Royal Palms State Beach** is only 4.5 total miles and still provides great views. In addition to the surrounding landscapes, kayakers are treated to unique sights of wildlife. Pelicans frequent the beach and surrounding ocean area. Sea lions and dolphins can often be seen during kayaking adventures. Ocean kayak tours are also available from private companies in the area.

In addition to paddling, the park also offers approximately five miles of **hiking trails** that crisscross the rocky bluffs. **Snorkeling and diving** are other options; large beds of kelp mark submerged reefs in the Abalone cove and are especially abundant on its west side.

Getting There: Rancho Palos Verdes • (310) 377-1222 • rpvca.gov

SAN DIEGO-LA JOLLA UNDERWATER PARK

Spanning 6,000 acres of coastal seas and tidelands, the San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park and Ecological Reserve shelters scores of marine plants and animals, submerged rock formations and archaeological relics. Two artificial reefs

attract colorful schools of fish and calm the waves, making the park a paradise for kayakers, snorkelers and divers from all over Southern California.

The Underwater Park waters stretch from **La Jolla Cove** to San Diego's northern boundary. The cove, a small beach nestled between sandstone cliffs, is part of the park's Ecological Reserve, a protected area in which fishing and the removal of artifacts—natural or not—are both prohibited. The reserve extends to the city-run La Jolla Shores beach, where the reef and its abundant marine life draw scuba divers and kayakers year-round.

Padding through the park's La Jolla Cove, kayakers pass over **leopard sharks**—harmless to humans—and **stingrays**, and water visibility sometimes tops 30 feet. Farther from the beach, look for **whales, dolphins and sea lions** swimming nearby. The park's **Marine Life Refuge**, a man-made reef near the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, has been an academic research area since 1929, and few places in the world offer this kind of access to such an array of marine life.

Kayakers are also welcome to explore the spectacular sea caves that dot the cliffs along the shoreline of San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park. The seven caves are whittled into a 75-million-year-old sandstone sea cliff and can only be explored by kayak. The caves are best viewed from the sea. Check conditions before you plan a paddling excursion.

Getting There: San Diego, CA • (619) 221-8899 • sandiego.gov



For answers to all your questions, go to OhRanger.com



CAMPING

Southern California's public lands span from backcountry forests with quiet meadows to secluded ridges with waterfront scenery, offering ample opportunities for RV campers and backpackers alike to enjoy a night in the California wild.

SAN CLEMENTE STATE BEACH

The mile-long stretch of beach at San Clemente has been attracting visitors for over 80 years. The weathered cliffs towering 150 feet above the beach make it feel remote despite its location midway between **San Diego** and **Los Angeles**. The rough, looming sandstone cliffs remain from marine terraces that took form beneath the ocean 30,000 years ago. The 160 family campsites are high above the beach on top of the bluffs, each accommodating up to eight people. Every site has its own fire ring, picnic table and shade ramada, and water is always nearby. The beach is just a five-minute walk from the family campsites. Some campsites offer ocean views depending on their location on the bluffs.

The park contains an RV area able to accommodate more than 142 RVs. Site sizes vary; they contain water, electrical and sewage hookups. There are also two group camps—the first provides ocean views and can accommodate up to 50 people and some vehicles with trailers; the second can also accommodate 50 people, though it only offers partial ocean views and is for tent use only. A picnic area offering wonderful views of the Pacific Ocean is a close walk from the family sites. The park also contains two group picnic areas.

Visitors can swim, sunbathe, surf and observe local wildlife from the beach. During

low tide, mussels, sea urchins and shore crabs can be found on rock formations at the north end of the beach. In early winter and spring, look for California gray whales offshore.

Note: Entrance gates are closed and locked nightly from 10 p.m. - 6 a.m.

Getting There: San Clemente, CA • (949) 492-3156 • parks.ca.gov

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Three ecosystems—the Colorado Desert, Mojave Desert, Little San Bernardino Mountains—come together in the nearly 800,000 acres of Joshua Tree. Taking in the massive park is more than a day's task as countless opportunities for adventure await. Within the park are nine developed campgrounds containing over 400 campsites and over 20 group sites (some close during summer months). The camps range in elevation from 3,000 feet to 4,500 feet. Each regular campsite can accommodate six people, three tents and two cars, and contains a fire grate and picnic table. Cottonwood, Indian Cover and Sheep Pass can accommodate between 10 to 60 people. **Black Rock** and **Cottonwood campgrounds** are the only campgrounds that offer water and flush toilets onsite. No sites have RV hookups.

Many hiking trails start in close vicinity to a campground. Five beautiful **palm oases**, **Lost Horse Mine/Mountain** and the park's largest Joshua Trees on the **Covington Flats** are some of the many destinations campers can explore during the day. Mountain bikers are welcome to ride on paved roads and certain dirt roads and trails in the park.

Backcountry camping is also available



Reconnect with nature by camping out under the stars at one of Southern California's many breathtaking campgrounds.

and presents the opportunity to enjoy Joshua Tree's vastness in desert solitude. Parking, land information, maps and necessary permits are available for backcountry campers at 13 staging areas in the park. The park encourages selecting the most durable location to set up camp as the ecosystem and natural beauties of the desert landscape are fragile. Campsites must always be one mile from roads and 500 feet from trails.

Water is scarce in the park, so make sure to pack enough. However, supplies can be replenished—water is available at Black Rock, Cottonwood, Oasis Visitor Center, Indian Cove Ranger Station and the West Entrance of the park.

Getting There: Joshua Tree, CA • (760) 367-5500 • nps.gov/jotr.

POINT MUGU STATE PARK

From the pinnacles of Boney Mountains State Wilderness Area to the sandy shores of Point Mugu Beach, Point Mugu State

Park encompasses 13,000 acres of land in the Santa Monica Mountains. With over 70 miles of hiking trails to explore, visitors can bear witness to varied scenery including **two major river canyons** and **valleys rife with sycamore and oak trees**.

The park's five miles of shoreline span **sandy beaches and bluffs**, where visitors can enjoy sunbathing, swimming and surf fishing. Spring is an especially scenic time to visit as wildflowers bloom and La Jolla Valley bursts with color. Hikers will be able to spot Chocolate Lily and Globe Gilia blooming along the **Chumash Trail**, which adjoins the **Mugu Peak Trail** with panoramic views across the Pacific.

Two campgrounds at Point Mugu, **Sycamore Canyon** and **Thornhill Broome**, feature RV and tent sites with fire pits and picnic tables but no hookups. Thornhill Broome offers the chance to camp right on the beach with over 60 sites. Portable toilets, potable water, and cold

NPS

ESSENTIAL GEAR

WATER FILTRATION & HYDRATION

Purify your drinking water while on the trail or abroad with **MSR's MiniWorks EX Water Filter**—compact and lightweight, this filter is perfect for overnight trips or day hikes. Designed to be ultra-lightweight while still pushing an impressive amount of water, the MiniWorks will keep you hydrated with even less work.

Hydro Flask's TempShield insulation has redefined the classic outdoor water bottle. The **32 ounce Wide Mouth bottle** keeps your beverage icy cold or piping hot from trailhead to summit and every step in-between. It's your perfect all-day-and-into-the-next refreshment solution.



water showers are available.

Sycamore Canyon features over 50 sites in a wooded setting. Flushable toilets and hot showers (fee) are available, as well as a nature center. A trail leads from the campground to a day use beach with picnic area, lifeguards and restroom.

The La Jolla group site accommodates one RV and up to 50 campers. Please note that campground gates open at 8 a.m. and close at 10 p.m. No entry is permitted after 10 p.m.

Getting There: Malibu, CA • (310) 457-8143 • parks.ca.gov.

ANZA-BORREGO DESERT STATE PARK

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, 90 miles east of San Diego, is 600,000 acres of beautiful desert wilderness that bustles with life. A favorite of **hikers** and **off-roaders**, the park's trails and backcountry roads are

rugged and remote, highlighted by **stunning canyon** and **Colorado Desert vistas**. In the spring, visitors flock to Anza-Borrego to see the breathtaking spectacle that is the **blooming desert wildflowers**.

The park operates three campgrounds, 11 cabins, over 70 standard tent sites, 10 horse sites, five group sites and over 40 hookups for RVs. The developed campgrounds have drinking water, toilets, picnic tables and other amenities.

The popular **Borrego Palm Canyon Campground**, near a lovely palm oasis and the park headquarters, has more than 100 campsites. The backcountry campgrounds are much more secluded, and **Sheep Canyon** offers a nice balance between facilities and wilderness.

Borrego Springs is a major stopover on the **Swainson's Hawks'** 6,000-mile spring migration from Argentina to their breeding grounds in the north. The best times to hawk-spot are in the morning and evenings. Families won't want to miss Anza-Borrego State Park's many **interpretive activities**, including guided hikes, nature walks, and campfire and **Junior Ranger programs**. Check with the park for a schedule of events and accessibility information.

Temperatures at Anza-Borrego regularly exceed 100°F in the summer, sometimes topping out at 120°F, and many park facilities close during the hottest months. Consider visiting during the milder spring and fall for a more enjoyable and much safer trip.

Getting There: Borrego Springs, CA • (760) 767-4205 • parks.ca.gov

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CALIFORNIA PARK?
TELL US! @OhRanger



THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

Fewer people have thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail than have summited the world's most daunting mountain: Everest. The trail stretches 2,650 miles from near Campo, California at the Mexican border north through California, Oregon and Washington before ending on the United States border with Canada in Manning Park, British Columbia.

In addition to crossing three states, the trail climbs nearly 60 major mountain passes, descends 19 major canyons, passes alongside 1,000 lakes, and travels through four national monuments, seven national parks, 26 national forests and five state parks.

Thru-hiking is not the only way to see the wonders of the trail, and section-hiking provides a nice alternative for many adventurers. Hikers can work around their everyday schedule and are able to hand

select hiking days based upon weather. The shorter hikes are also much less strenuous, making them safer and even accessible to families. One downside is that section-hikers need to be prepared with rides at trailheads as many hikes are end-to-end instead of loops. A Forest Adventure Pass is required for parking on most National Forest lands. For more information about the trail, contact the Pacific Crest Trail Association by visiting pcta.org or calling (916) 285-1846.

Esca Flowme/Stock

DEEP CREEK HOT SPRINGS

The approach to the popular Deep Creek Hot Springs along the Pacific Crest Trail is a mildly strenuous 12-mile out-and-back hike that typically takes around six hours of hiking time. Temperatures in the summer months can be very warm, exceeding 100° F, making the best time

TRAIL GORILLAS

Maintaining a 2,650-mile trail takes effort. The Pacific Crest Trail Association is committed to protecting and preserving the trail for future generations of hikers. The Trail Gorillas are a regional volunteer group based in Southern California. They have adopted the 700 miles of Southern California trail between the Mexican border and the Kennedy Meadows. Volunteers are needed to help maintain and improve the trail. Volunteer projects can last anywhere from a day to a week. Not only do volunteers get the satisfaction of preserving a natural jewel, but benefits also include a free PCT wilderness permit so volunteers can get out and enjoy the trail they've worked to improve. To volunteer or gather more information, visit pcta.org/volunteer or Adventure16.com.

USFS



Trail Gorillas have adopted 700 miles of the PCT in Southern California.

ESSENTIAL GEAR

ILLUMINATION

The original LED headlamp from **Petzl**, the **Tikka 2** has been redesigned to crank out 200 lumens with a longer burn time for practical outdoor activities, all in a compact and easy-to-operate design. The Tikka 2 is your perfect companion, whether your going hiking, camping, or just reading under the covers.



for this hike from September to May. While the springs are very popular and rarely unoccupied, this section of the PCT is not the most popular approach and offers much solitude.

The warm, soothing waters of the springs are ideal for tired hikers. The water is usually about 105° F at the source before running into the seven man-made pools for wading. Scenery at the springs and along the trail is terrific. Approximately halfway along the trail to the springs, hikers can detour to see a **waterfall overlook**.

While camping is not permitted near the hot springs, camping is available at the **Mojave River Forks Regional Park** for those looking to hike overnight. Camping is also permitted on the PCT about one mile away from the springs. Water in the springs can contain amoeba that are dangerous if swallowed. While wading in the pools is safe, visitors should not drink the water. As a precaution it is recommended that visitors do not submerge their heads in the spring's waters.

Getting There: Hesperia, CA
• Arrowhead Lake Road • (909) 382-2600
• www.fs.usda.gov/sbnf.

MOUNT BADEN-POWELL

At 9,407 feet, Mount Baden-Powell is the second tallest mountain in the San Gabriel range behind only Mt. Baldy and its subsidiary summits. Baden-Powell received its name to honor the founder of the Boy Scouts. The hike along the PCT is eight miles one-way to Dawson Saddle where hikers will need to arrange a car or bike. An out-and-back hike is also available with hikers summiting Baden-Powell and then returning down the same path. A loop hike will still be an approximately eight-mile hike. The average hiker takes about five hours to complete this trip.

The hike begins at Vincent Gap with a collection of switchbacks to begin the ascent. Jeffrey and sugar pines, white firs and incense cedars make up the conifer forest where hikers begin their trip. When they reach 8,000 feet elevation, the surrounding forest shifts to lodgepole pines. Just shy of the mountain's peak, hikers can see the **Wally Waldron tree**, a twisted 1,500-year-old limber pine. From the peak, visitors can take in sweeping views of the surrounding area, Mt. Baldy and the San Gabriel Range. Hikers choosing the one-way trip will be treated to a second mountain summit on their trail: **Mount Burnham**. A third, **Throop Peak**, is another option to extend the hike. It is accessible by passing the split to Dawson Saddle and then returning back to it along the PCT.

Getting There: Angeles National Forest, CA • Vincent Gap • (626) 574-1613
• www.fs.usda.gov/angeles

EAGLE ROCK

Eagle Rock is large formation that



BLM

The Pacific Crest Trail passes through grasslands, wilderness and mountains.

bears an uncanny resemblance to its namesake bird, with stone wings spread majestically against the sky beyond. Hikers can hop on a gently sloping stretch of the PCT just off Highway 79 in Warner Springs for a 6.5-mile roundtrip hike to this photo-worthy destination.

For a hike of this length, the landscape is surprisingly diverse. The trail begins by winding through stands of oaks and past babbling creeks before cutting across rock expanses and grassy meadows with views of distant mountains. Keep an eye out to spot **prickly pear cacti** and other flora and fauna that call California deserts home. Cattle may be seen grazing in the pastures beyond.

After approximately three miles, a short side trail leads to the base of Eagle Rock. Hikers will witness the formation transform from a pile of stone to a stately raptor as they travel uphill and their vantage points shift. Once they've arrived, many visitors choose to snap a photo with the formation or stop to admire the views of **Volcan and Palomar mountains** rising in the distance. Some hikers time their visit to arrive near dusk and witness the sun setting behind Eagle Rock.

Getting There: Warner Springs, CA • Cleveland National Forest • **(858) 673-6180** • www.fs.usda.gov/cleveland.

MORENA BUTTE

Morena Butte is a granite outcrop of

rock that rises above **Lake Morena**. The trail takes hikers from the lake to the peak where, on a clear day, they are treated to wonderful views of the lake, Morena Valley below and Los Pinos Mountain to the northwest. Here, a diverse landscape of rock-strewn ridges, V-shaped canyons and grassy depressions known as potreritos (pastures) combine to create picture-perfect vistas.

The hike is eight miles out-and-back and takes about four hours on average. The cooler months from October to May offer the best time to take the hike, which commences from the PCT Trailhead outside of **Lake Morena County Park**.

As hikers climb hills covered in chaparral, views of the lake are terrific. Closer to the summit, the trail becomes slightly more difficult as hikers are forced to stride across massive slabs of pink-

tinted granite. Here, the trail can become harder to follow, so hikers should keep an eye out for cairns (rock piles) that denote the trail.

Three distinct summits are at Morena Butte and each is easily accessible from the others. Each of the three summits offers a distinct, captivating view of the surrounding areas.

For those seeking a different trip back, the unmarked **Morena Butte** and **Ward's Flat Trail** offer an option for the return trip. The trail splits from the PCT about a mile from the summit. It travels through a valley to the north before connecting with a road that passes the shore of the lake.

Getting There: Cleveland National Forest, CA • Lake Morena • **(858) 673-6180** • www.fs.usda.gov/cleveland.



BEWARE THE POODLE-DOG BUSH

Turricula parryi, commonly referred to as **Poodle-Dog Bush**, is causing issues for PCT hikers in Southern California. This purple, flowering plant is endemic to the area and gives off a strong, unpleasant smell. It thrives in areas that have recently been disturbed by fire or landslides. It is especially abundant in the San Gabriel Mountains area. Like poison oak, to which it is closely related, contact with the plant can cause a mild to severe irritation, but can also cause severe respiratory distress. Symptoms can take hours or days to appear. Keep an eye out for the plant and avoid contact; it's stick to skin and clothing. Great effort has been done to remove Poodle-Dog Bush. Help out by sticking to the PCT instead of alternating off of it. For more information visit pcta.org.

PCTA/Lon Cooper



Avoid contact with the Poodle-Dog Bush.



IF YOU ONLY HAVE A DAY

In Southern California, you never have to venture far to enjoy an outdoor adventure. Even if you've only got a day to spend outside, the parks and public lands near—and even within!—the region's major cities offer truly wild experiences.

FROM LOS ANGELES

WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORIC PARK

At Will Rogers State Historic Park, explore the 31-room ranch house once owned by Will Rogers, a Hollywood icon in the 1920s and '30s. After Rogers and his wife died, the ranch became a state park. Visitors can take a house tour, horseback riding lesson



Adobe Stock

Watch for whales in the waves below from Cabrillo National Monument.

and a guided trail ride—Rogers was a noted equestrian—of the ranch its former owner so loved. The park also has several miles of hiking trails, with access to the renowned Backbone Trail, and visitor center/gift shop. Some ongoing restoration efforts are focused on the ranch house. • (310) 454-8212 • parks.ca.gov

TOPANGA STATE PARK

Near Santa Monica, Topanga State Park is the largest wildland within a major city, protecting 11,000 acres of canyons and open grassland. Spend a day hiking or mountain biking on Topanga's trails, and have a picnic lunch at Trippet Ranch. In the park's canyons, look for ancient marine fossils and enjoy stunning Pacific views. • (310) 455-2465 • parks.ca.gov

FROM SAN DIEGO

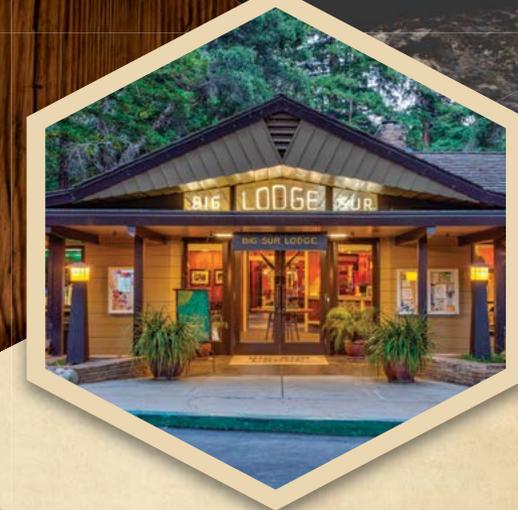
CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT

The park commemorates the explorations of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, who in 1542 led the first European expedition to what is now the U.S. west coast. Cabrillo National Monument marks Cabrillo's landing site in the San Diego Bay and celebrates Point Loma's cultural history. On a visit to the park, hike the two-and-a-half-mile Bayside Trail for sweeping views of the bay and city. The tide pools on the western side of the point are home to a host of sea creatures, and migrating Pacific gray whales swim along the peninsula every winter. Near the whale overlook is historic Old Point Loma Lighthouse, which stood watch over the bay from 1855 to 1891. • (619) 557-5450 • nps.gov/cabr

Big Sur Lodge

ENJOY SCENIC VIEWS AT A HISTORIC DESTINATION

Located in the heart of Pfeiffer State Park, Big Sur Lodge offers single, double, and family size rooms with fireplaces and kitchenettes and a myriad of wonderful outdoor activities for all travelers' needs including hiking and swimming. There is a restaurant, outdoor patio, gift store, and deli. Wedding and corporate group events/dining facilities are available.



Big Sur Lodge
BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA

BIGSURLODGE.COM
RESERVATIONS: (855) 238-6950

OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO STATE HISTORIC PARK

It may be a little touristy, but the Old Town San Diego State Historic Park is still a great place for a fun history lesson. Learn about life in early San Diego at this living museum. Tour restored and reconstructed buildings, including the Mason Street School, California’s first public schoolhouse. Visitors can also visit a working blacksmith shop and an 1860s newspaper office. Kids always enjoy interacting with the park staff, all of whom dress in period attire and perform as 19th-century citizens. And the park’s restaurants offer tasty meals and plenty of charm.

• (619) 220-5422 • parks.ca.gov

FROM COSTA MESA

CORONA DEL MAR STATE BEACH

Corona del Mar’s lovely beach is a perfect spot for group and family outings. Set up at one of the fire pits close to the ocean, spaced far enough apart for some privacy, and enjoy a day of swimming, sunbathing and much more, capped by a



Adobe Stock

Catch the sunset over picturesque Lake Perris.

blazing bonfire and the setting sun. Before you go, explore the beach’s cliffs and rock jetty to find tidal pools and coastal caves near the entrance to Newport Harbor.

• (949) 644-3151 • parks.ca.gov

CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK

Much more than a beach—although its 3.2 miles of sandy shores are spectacular—Crystal Cove State Park includes 2,400 acres of undeveloped backcountry that draw horseback riders, hikers and mountain bikers. Wander through the wooded canyons and coastal sage scrub, and then cool off in the Pacific surf. Scuba and skin divers also frequent Crystal Cove’s waters, which are protected as an underwater park.

• (949) 494-3539 • parks.ca.gov

FROM RIVERSIDE

CHINO HILLS STATE PARK

Nestled in the rolling hills of the Santa Ana Canyon, Chino Hills State Park is more than 14,000 acres of greenery and open space. Sandwiched between Anaheim and Riverside, the park is an outdoor oasis and, with 90 miles of hilly trails and fire roads, a favorite of bicyclists.

• (951) 780-6222 • parks.ca.gov

LAKE PERRIS STATE RECREATION AREA

Picturesque Lake Perris is a deep-blue jewel tucked between mountain ridges that screen the park from the surrounding urban sprawl. The lake is a popular picnicking spot, featuring almost 300 sites. Visitors spend their days boating, swimming and fishing. Lake Perris’ largemouth bass, trophy-sized bluegill and stocked rainbow trout are all prized catches. Recent work on the dam at Bernasconi beach created a connection

SamAntonioPhotography/Stock



Beach and forest meet at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, home to 300 endangered and protected plant species.

between a shorter trail and the multi-use trail that allows visitors to travel the entire 9-mile circumference of Lake Perris. Another trail leads to the summit of Terri Peak.

• (951) 940-5600 • parks.ca.gov

FROM OCEANSIDE

MOONLIGHT STATE BEACH

Moonlight State Beach in Encinitas offers beachgoers a variety of activities and facilities, including a children’s play area, volleyball and tennis courts, showers and fire rings.

Visitors can grab snacks from a small stand, but there are plenty of restaurants in town, just a short walk away. The sand is superb, the surf gentle, the bonfires warm and you’ll be hard-pressed to find a more relaxing way to spend a day.

• (760) 633-2740 • parks.ca.gov

TORREY PINES STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Just down the highway from Solana Beach, Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve shelters 2,000 acres of wilderness, 300 endangered and protected plant species, as well as the country’s rarest pine trees—the namesake Torrey pine. Hiking, guided walks and birdwatching are just a few of the activities available in the park, and visitors at the adjoining Torrey Pines State Beach can enjoy the beautiful waterfront and coastal scenery as well. There are parking/entrance fees from \$10 to \$25 that vary based on location, dates and times.

• (858) 755-2063 • parks.ca.gov

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STAFF FAVORITES

With a constant focus and deep knowledge of the outdoors, Adventure 16 staff can provide expert advice about where to take full advantage of the natural beauties in Southern California. Here are some of their favorite places:

CLIMBING

REAL HIDDEN VALLEY, JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Affectionately referred to as Jtree, Joshua Tree National Park is a utopia for rock climbers and hikers. With acres of sticky granite wall and boulder, whether you are just beginning or experienced, this is a must-visit park for any climbing enthusiast. A favorite spot is Real Hidden Valley, as there are many route choices in close proximity to each other, as well as nearby camping spots. The best times to visit are in the fall and spring when temperatures are bearable. Jtree is the high desert, so remember to bring lots of water and wear layers. Despite the high daytime temperatures, at night it gets very cold!

**-Adventure 16
San Diego Team**

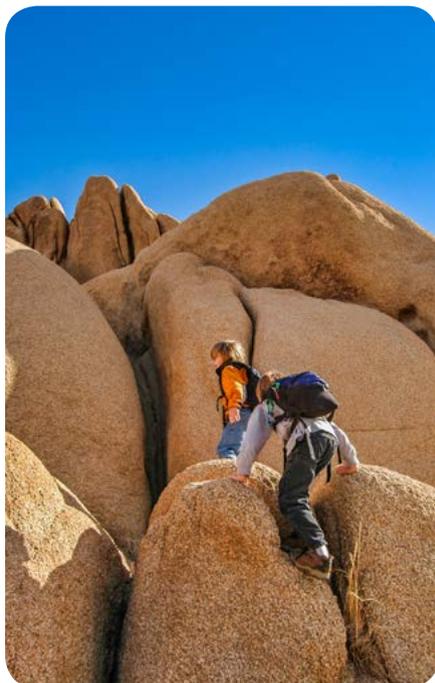
BACKPACKING

SAN JACINTO PEAK THE EASY WAY, MOUNT SAN JACINTO STATE PARK

My favorite quick backpacking trip in So Cal is San Jacinto Peak via the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. It can be done in a day; however, it makes a good one- or two-night trip that has a variety of remarkable and unique attributes. They include a

breathtaking 6,000-foot ride up the tram, a pine forest campsite and water source at Round Valley only a couple miles from the trailhead, and a spectacular view from the 10,834-foot rocky peak just three miles from your camping spot. The extra bonus is enjoying a cold beverage or a meal at the restaurant at the top of the tram. It's the perfect trip for first-time backpackers. Beware that the quick elevation gain can affect some people, so all the more reason to spread out the time you spend there.

**-John D. Mead
President
Adventure 16**



Enjoy one – or 100 – of Joshua Tree's great climbing routes.

iStock

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BIG SANTA ANITA CANYON

Nestled in the Angeles National Forest, Big Santa Anita Canyon is a popular backpacking destination. When I was a wee lad, my family loved the year-round, shaded hikes to Hermit Falls. Our family dogs would come along but they must be leashed. My father would tell us stories of the boy's camp he attended in the canyon in the 1950s and the history of the remaining private cabins that dot the trails. As an adult, I prefer the solitude of Sturtevant Camp and the challenging day hikes ascending Mount Wilson with its observatories, museum, and the reward of a Cosmic Café burger and fries.

—William Keith
Sales Associate
A16 West LA

CAMPING

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

In the spring, wildflowers are abundant in areas. The entire park is bigger than three eastern states combined. It is the hottest and the lowest place in North America. The Charcoal Kilns are one of the many great historical attractions at Death Valley.

—Adventure 16
West LA Team

SYCAMORE CANYON, POINT MUGU STATE PARK

The canyon is close to the beach. On trails, there are great views of the coast. Oak trees are everywhere and the smell of the ocean is always present. Sycamore is a great place to mountain bike, too!

—Adventure 16
West LA Team

VALLEY OF THE MOON

Located on BLM land in the southwest corner of Imperial County, this amazing Joshua Tree-esque desert contains huge boulders and cool rock formations that provide endless opportunities to camp and climb. We love to sleep without a tent in one of the wind breaks and enjoy the incredible view of the stars in the night sky practically on top of you. While you're in the area, head over to In-Ko-Pah and visit the Desert View Tower and nearby caves and tunnels.

—Adventure 16
San Diego Staff

MOUNT PINOS, LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

This is a great area for stargazing. There are also wonderful hiking trails and car camping opportunities. Cross-country skiing also presents a good option. The area is a pine forest, which is an unusual floral makeup. Usual flora near Los Angeles is scrub brush. There is access to water. It is a cool little place near 8,000 feet in elevation.

—Adventure 16
West LA Team

HIKING

SANTA YNEZ FALLS TRAIL

This trail starts in the Pacific Palisades and winds into Topanga State Park. It's one of our favorites because we can take someone less experienced and easily do the 2.5 mile hike to the falls, or for a bit of a workout we will take the same trail up to Trippet Ranch and head to Eagle Rock along the Backbone Trail. Kids love the waterfall trail because there is a great destination to hike to, and even in hotter conditions there still seems to be some

water coming down the falls and right after the rain it really gets flowing. This is a great shady hike and the only thing to watch for would be poison oak. Hope to see you on the trail!

—Adventure 16
West LA Team

CORRAL CANYON PARK

Located in Malibu, Corral Canyon is a nice, relaxing hike to some beautiful waterfalls. For a more challenging option, the hike climbing the local mountains is a good choice. If you can make it to the top, there are great views of Malibu and the beaches on the ocean.

—Adventure 16
West LA Team

CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK

I hike nearly every day of the year and the one area I always return to and always enjoy is a loop to Stonewall Peak and Cuyamaca Peak, in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. This challenging hike to both summits is done using a combination of many different routes which can begin near the Trout Pond Trailhead or Azalea Glen Trailhead. Either way, you are treated to jaw-dropping, 360° views of the entire county of San Diego, as well as gorgeous pine, oak and sycamore-filled landscapes, and abundant encounters with wildlife.

—James Almon
A16 Information
Systems Manager

LA TUNA CANYON PARK

This is a great scenic hiking area. Views of the ocean and city can be seen from the hike. Sometimes, you will spot deer, dolphins and hawks during this short

two-hour hike. Since it is so close to Malibu, this is a great place to get out of the city if you only have a few hours to hike.

—Adventure 16
West LA Team

UPPER SOLSTICE CANYON, SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

This section of the Backbone Trail is hidden far back in a beautiful canyon. There is some elevation gain and loss on the trail. Sandstone boulders, a seasonal creek and enchanted, sweeping views are visible along the trail. From the top, a climb up Castro Peak is an option.

—Erika Fiksdal
Store Manager
Adventure 16 West LA



Southern California is home to both the highest point in the contiguous United States (Mount Whitney) as well as its lowest (Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park). Across the state there are a number of distinct ecological zones, each determined by climate and elevation.

Each of these zones is comprised of uniquely rich and diverse wilderness and many of the plants and animals that inhabit these far off areas are also thriving in our front and backyards. From forests and mountains, to rivers and oceans, to the deserts that surround it all, several plants and animals call this area home.

While there are enough trails, rapids, rocks and bike paths to keep you active for any length of stay, we encourage every visitor to slow down and keep an eye open for the plants and animals that may be right there with you and that make California such a special place.

We have highlighted a few of the plants and animal species that are native Southern California. Keep your binoculars handy and eyes peeled—and remember to help keep wildlife wild! Don't feed or approach wild animals. Instead, view them for a distance. Happy spotting!

FLORA

Chosen as the state flower in 1903, the **California poppy** (*eschsholzia californica*) is a yellow flowering plant that blooms brightly throughout the spring and summer. It has lacy, blue-green leaves and golden-orange flowers. The California poppy is known for its ability to grow in difficult areas such as roadsides. Its flowers close during the night and on cloudy days.

The **California redbud** (*Cercis orbiculata*) is one of the most colorful shrubs in the region. In spring its flowers bloom a deep pink. The pink sprays can be seen from February to April, but each shrub flowers for only about two weeks. In autumn the heart-shaped leaves turn red before falling off. Redbuds, like many of California's plants, are drought tolerant.

These spiky twisted trees lend their name to **Joshua Tree National Park** (*Yucca brevifolia*). They are typically found in the Mojave Desert, but can be found as far east as the Sonoran Desert, or mixed in with the pines in the San Bernardino Mountains. Many birds, mammals, reptiles and insects depend on the Joshua tree for food and shelter, making it an integral part of California's ecosystems.

The **Western sycamore** (*Platanus racemosa*) is common to the canyons, streams and rivers of the region. Its leaves turn a golden-orange color in the fall. Western sycamores are unique because they are nearly drought-resistant once full grown. Unlike most trees, sycamores have separate male and female trees. They rely upon the wind for pollination.

Wildflowers grow across the state, but there are none that compare to the spring bloom in Death Valley National Park—one of its most popular attractions. To see this land awash in color is an unforgettable experience! Some years the flowering season is spectacular, other times it is nearly nonexistent. If you are lucky enough to see wildflowers, remember that you are in a national park and must heed its rules and regulations. Picking flowers is strictly prohibited.



WATCHABLE WILDLIFE



1 BOBCAT (*LYNX RUFUS*)

Named for their stubby bobbed tails, bobcats are famous for their pointed ears with black tufts of hair on the tips. These felines have a reddish- or yellowish-brown coat. Bobcats are most active at dusk and dawn when they hunt their prey, which include hares, rabbits and mule deer. • **Weight** 20–40 lbs • **Length** 2–4 ft tall • **Active** year-round. Photo: Shutterstock

2 DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP (*OVIS CANADENSIS NELSONI*)

Desert bighorn sheep reside throughout the southwest and are similar to other bighorns except that they have adapted to extended periods of time without water. They have unusual padded hooves, allowing them to climb steep rocky terrain quickly and gracefully. • **Height** 5–6 feet • **Weight** 150–200 lbs • **Active** year-round. Photo: Shutterstock

3 MOUNTAIN LION (*PUMA CONCOLOR*)

Mountain lions are California's largest hunters, hunting mainly mule deer. These predators are generally solitary and spend most of their life alone. Due to extensive habitat loss, the number of mountain lions in California has continued to dwindle. • **Weight** 80–180 lbs • **Length** 7–8 feet (including tail) • **Active** year-round. Photo: Shutterstock

4 MULE DEER (*ODOCOILEUS HEMIONUS*)

The generally timid mule deer feeds mainly on the shrubs and bushes of Southern California. Mule deer are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk. The mule deer's main predators include coyotes, mountain lions and bobcats • **Weight** 70–475 lbs • **Size** 4–7 feet • **Active** year-round. Photo: Shutterstock

5 RED-TAILED HAWK (*BUTEO JAMAICENSIS*)

The red-tailed hawk is one of the most adaptable bird species, found in a wide range of habitats. It feeds mainly on mice, small birds and reptiles. Red-tailed hawks are said to be able to see a mouse from half a mile away. They can be identified by their broad, rust-colored tails. • **Weight** 2–4 lbs • **Wingspan** 43–57 in • **Active** year-round. Photo: Adobe Stock

6 WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (*APHELOCOMA CALIFORNICA*)

The Western Scrub-jay is found in the woodlands of Southern California. Feeding mostly on nuts, seeds and insects, Scrub-jays have also been known to steal the eggs of the red-tailed hawk. Please do not feed these birds, which are sometimes seen at campgrounds. • **Length** 11 in • **Wingspan** 16–20 in • **Active** year-round. Photo: Adobe Stock



PHOTOGRAPHY

For millennia, we've looked towards the heavens and contemplated what's beyond our orbit and universe. More recently, stargazing has become increasingly difficult for millions of people living in developed areas. If you live in a populated area east of the Mississippi or along the Pacific coast, odds are that you can count the number of stars you see on your hands. National and state parks—remote and minimally developed—not only protect our land, but also our dark skies which are ideal for astrophotography.

There are two primary types of astrophotography shots that yield different, but stellar compositions. A long exposure setting will show stars trailing across the sky, while a shorter exposure will show pinpoints of light—objects that a camera can capture that the unaided eye cannot. Both require a camera with interchangeable lenses and manual controls to set aperture, ISO, and exposure settings. Here's what you'll need to start:

- **A sturdy tripod:** Simply put, a shaky tripod will yield blurry photos.
- **A cable release or remote control or intervalometer:** You'll want to avoid touching your camera to minimize shake. The addition of an intervalometer will allow you to take sequential long exposures.
- **Batteries:** Your aperture may be open for several hours, so it's important to have multiple fresh and fully charged batteries.
- **A wide lens:** Use the fastest, widest lens available.
- **A head lamp:** It'll be useful to set up your equipment and illuminate your foreground.

Check the cloud cover; if there's too much wait until you have a clearer night. Before you start, set your focus to infinity and turn off your autofocus and high ISO noise reduc-

tion. Next, set your white balance to daylight settings (5500k) and turn on your mirror lock to avoid mirror shake. Wait until the moon is out, too, as it'll illuminate and add detail to your foreground. Make sure that it's behind you. To capture star trails:

- Set your ISO at 200 to reduce digital noise.
- Compose your image, making sure you have interesting features in the foreground.
- Choose your focal length. The longer the focal length, the quicker your star trails will start to form.
- Set your camera to manual mode so that you can select your shutter speed and aperture.
- Set your aperture between f/2.8 and f/4 for best results.
- Select "bulb mode" as your shutter speed.
- Use your cable release or remote to open the shutter or set your timer for two to four minutes.

Check your results. If your picture is too dark, increase the exposure time. If your trails are too short, increase the exposure time. Keep playing around with your settings to get the results you desire. To learn how to take photos of the milky way and millions of points of light, visit ohranger.com/brightskies.

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Photographing the night sky is as close as many of us will get to exploring space.



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With unmatched solitude, spectacular views, and discounted rates, the off-season in Moab is fast becoming one of the most rewarding times to visit. Enjoy year-round access to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Dead Horse Point State Park and thousands of square miles of spectacular red rock scenery. No matter what time of year you visit, Moab's warmth and hospitality will shine through.



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discovermoab.com



JUST FOR KIDS

An outdoor adventure in Southern California gives you a chance to get back to nature and learn about plant and animal life, living history and the wonders of the ecosystem. Here's a helpful rundown of some fun ways to get involved.

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

The Junior Ranger Program is a great way to have fun while learning what makes any national or state park special. Pick up an activity booklet at a visitor center and complete as many of the activities as you can to earn patches and certificates.

WEBRANGERS

Can't make it to a national park? Learn about national parks from home by becoming a WebRanger! Play interactive and educational games, take the WebRanger pledge and print out and sign the membership card. Log on to nps.gov/webangers to get started. You can also download a park passport and find information on inspiring things to do outdoors at kids.parks.ca.gov.

LITTER GETTERS

The Litter Getter Program lets kids earn prizes at California State Parks, and at the same time help protect local wildlife. For more information, visit kids.parks.ca.gov.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Whether you've never been horseback riding, or you've been riding all your life, taking a horseback ride is a great way to see a park. Many parks offer site-specific trails with a guide (or if you have the know-how, without one) and the experience is

well worth it. Parks like Will Rogers State Historic Park and Topanga State Park are a great place to start. A horseback ride beats a car trip through a park any day!

WALK WITH A PARK RANGER

Get the real scoop on nature during a ranger-guided walk or attend a presentation at campground amphitheatres. Ask at visitor centers for current times and topics.

EXPLORE NATURE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

If you can't get to one of California's parks, look for nature in your own backyard. You can start a nature journal to write down all the nature you see. You can organize the journal by season or habitat. If writing isn't for you, simply look outside your window to observe the animals. For ideas on activities you can do in your backyard, visit parks.ca.gov.

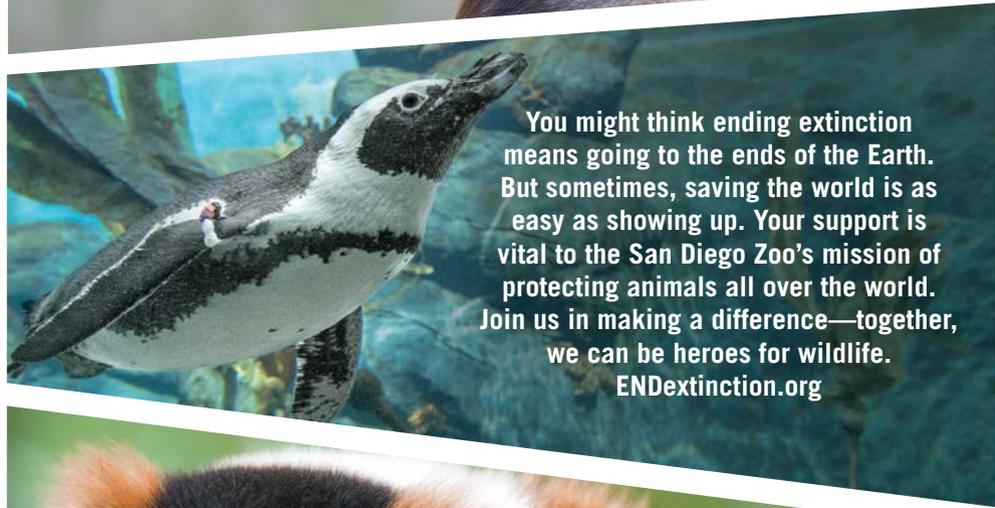
FISHING

Several lakes and rivers throughout Southern California make for great fishing. The region is known for trout and catfish. A fishing license is required for anyone over age 16 and can be purchased in local communities. Always follow local, state and park fishing regulations.

STATE PARKS KIDS MAILBOX

After you've visited a state park, be sure to share it with other kids! You may have some great ideas on how California State Parks or the website can be even more fun. E-mail kidsmail@parks.ca.gov or send letters to: California State Parks, Interpretation & Education Division, PO Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296.

You Can Help Turn Things Around



You might think ending extinction means going to the ends of the Earth. But sometimes, saving the world is as easy as showing up. Your support is vital to the San Diego Zoo's mission of protecting animals all over the world. Join us in making a difference—together, we can be heroes for wildlife. ENDextinction.org



San Diego Zoo Global is involved in conservation projects in 45 countries, working to save more than 100 species, including gelada monkeys, African penguins, and lemurs—animals you can see in the San Diego Zoo's Conrad Prebys Africa Rocks. **SAN DIEGO ZOO**



EDITOR'S PICKS



Photos: Adobe Stock | Michael Zeigler/Stock | CampPhoto/Stock

Take in the colorful beauty of Topanga State Park; Get to know the wildlife of California's coasts; Hike to the John Muir Hut in the footsteps of California's famed naturalist.

Find earthquake faults and marine fossils at the country's largest state park within a major city, **Topanga State Park**. From atop high mesas, take in the views of the Santa Monica Mountains, valleys and the Pacific Ocean from the **Backbone Trail** in the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area.

Bike the **Santa Ana River Trail** 110 miles from Bear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Take advantage of **Hellhole Canyon Preserve's** nearly 14 miles of trails and the view from Rodriguez Mountain. Ride on horseback through the former home of a 1930s Hollywood star at **Will Rogers State Park**.

See the city, mountain and ocean views on the bike ride along the **Mulholland Corridor** in Los Angeles County.

Enjoy the volcanic tuff and over 100 bolted climbing routes at **Echo Cliffs**. Explore the waters of **Crystal Cove State Park** and see rays, sea stars, rocky reefs and kelp forests.

Explore the geological masterpieces of the **Devil's Punchbowl** canyon.

Summit **Garnet Peak** at sunrise to be treated to the morning sun creeping across the desert below. Hike up to **El Cajon Mountain's** summit and enjoy views of the Pacific Ocean, Mexico and surrounding mountains.

Surf, swim and take in the wonderful views of San Diego Bay at **Silver Strand State Beach**. Experience wildlife and their habitat at San Diego's **La Jolla Underwater Park**.

Hike the **Pacific Crest Trail** to a collection of cascading waterfalls at Kitchen Creek.

Wildness reminds us what it means to be **HUMAN,** what we are **CONNECTED TO** rather than what **WE ARE SEPARATED FROM."**
terry tempest williams



NATURE VALLEY

HAVE SOME
FAMILY FUN

CLIMB A MOUNTAIN

SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

RECHARGE

EAT A NATURE VALLEY BAR

RUN A RIVER

CAST A LINE

FIND YOUR
HAPPY PLACE

REFRESH

HIT THE TRAIL

REFLECT

TAKE A HIKE WHERE THE WIFI IS WEAK!

You're not going to remember the time you spent surfing the web. Get back to nature and see why you'll find the best tweets outside, not online.



#NatureGives