

California State Parks in San Diego Protecting Natural Wonders and Preserving History

California State Parks in San Diego not only protect the state's natural wonders but also preserve California history. Visitors have the opportunity to walk through pine groves, stroll along the beach, or step back in time through historic buildings.

Here's a sample of what State Parks in the area have to offer:

Border Field State Park is an important wildlife habitat. The park's salt and freshwater marshes provide refuge for migrating waterfowl and resident birds, such as the black-necked stilt, teal, and pelican. Birders, hikers, and equestrians can use the park's network of trails to explore the salt marsh and beach. The visitor center features exhibits about the natural history of the area. The park is 15 miles south of San Diego via I-5, Hollister and Monument Roads. For more information, call the park at (619) 575-3613.

Cardiff State Beach features a gently sloping sandy beach – and one of the most popular surfing spots in the state. It's a great place for swimming, surfing, scuba diving and relaxing. The beach is one mile south of Cardiff on Old Highway 101. Accessible rest rooms are available. For more information, call the park at (760) 753-5091.

Carlsbad State Beach offers swimming, surfing and picnicking at the foot of coastal bluffs. The beach is in Carlsbad on Carlsbad Boulevard at Tamarack. For more information, call the park at (760) 438-3143.

Old Town San Diego State Historic Park represents life in the Mexican and early American periods of California from 1821 to 1872. The park, which includes original and reconstructed buildings, shops, restaurants and interpretive features (including museums, exhibits and living history programs), is located on San Diego Avenue and Twiggs Street in San Diego.

California has always been – and continues to be – a diverse place. The people who lived in this historic section of San Diego reflect the state's diverse history. These historic residents include Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders and people from all over the United States – and all over the world. They made Old Town their home and contributed to its fascinating mix of history and legend.

For more information about Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, call the park at (619) 220-5422 or (858) 642-4200.

SAN ELIJO STATE BEACH features swimming, surfing and camping. A nearby reef is popular with snorklers and divers. Visitors can also explore the park's tidepools. The park is on Old Highway 101 in Cardiff. The park has accessible rest rooms and campsites. A number of campsites at the beach offer views of the shore. For camping reservations, call 1-800-444-PARK (7275). For more information, call the park at (760) 753-5091 or (858) 642-4200.

SAN ONOFRE STATE BEACH is south of San Clemente on I-5; exit at Basilone and continue south on the west side frontage road past the nuclear power plant to the park entrance.

San Onofre has six 1/4-mile hiking trails from the bluff to the beach. Visitors can choose a trail to the beach, then choose a different trail back. The bluff area is a coastal sage habitat area, which offers great views of the ocean below. Hikers transition from the sandstone bluffs to the warm, sandy beach below, which offers 3 1/2 miles of coastline for beachcombing. Trestles Beach, within the park, is a popular surfing spot.

There is parking at each trailhead with restrooms and drinking water available. There is signage at the park about the trails that lead to the beach. Temperatures vary from 55° to 70°. The beach is open from 6 a.m to 8 p.m in the winter.

A campground in the park is situated on sandstone bluffs. For camping reservations, call 1-800-444-PARK (7275). For more information, call the park at (949) 492-4872 or (949) 492-0802.

SAN PASQUAL BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC PARK

commemorates the bloody battle of 1846 between U.S. and Mexican troops resulting in the U.S. takeover of California. The park museum, which features videos, maps and dioramas, is accessible. The park is eight miles south of Escondido on Highway 78. For more information, call the park at (760) 737-2201.

SILVER STRAND STATE BEACH was named for the tiny silver seashells in the sand there. Sometimes visitors can see porpoises and migrating gray whales. The beach is 4.5 miles south of Coronado on Highway 75. Camping is for self-contained vehicles only. For more information, call (619) 435-5184.

SOUTH CARLSBAD STATE BEACH has a staircase leading down to the 110-acre park, which is on the outer edge of San Diego Bay. Visitors can swim, fish, picnic, skin dive and surf. The park has developed blufftop campsites. For camping reservations, call 1-800-444-PARK (7275). For more information, call the park at (760) 438-3143 or (858) 642-4200.

TORREY PINES STATE RESERVE AND STATE BEACH feature many scenic trails overlooking the beach. The reserve, featuring high broken cliffs and deep ravines on headlands overlooking the sea, is home of the rare Torrey pine, a relic of the ice age. The solitude and primeval wilderness of the area is appealing to many visitors from the surrounding urban areas. The park has over 1,700 acres of beach, marsh and coastal bluff.

The park has accessible parking and restrooms. There is a visitor center at the reserve. From Freeway 5, take the Carmel Valley Road exit and proceed west on Carmel Valley Road, turn left on Highway 101. The Guy Fleming Trail is a short, relatively easy hike that runs through Torrey Pine trees and chaparral. From the trail, hikers can enjoy spectacular sunsets in the evening. For more information, call (858) 755-2063. Torrey Pines State Reserve is a Watchable

Wildlife site.



For more information about California State Parks, visit the website at

www.parks.ca.gov.

