San Diego Camping Guide

Beach / Coastal
   Desert
   Lake
   Mountain
**Campland on the bay**  
1-800-4-BAY-FUN  
2211 Pacific Beach Dr  
San Diego, CA 92109

What’s Allowed: Tents/RV  
Description: Campsites have showers and restrooms. Also, a marina and boat launch, fishing, bird sanctuary, game room and video arcade. Located next to Pacific Beach, Mission Beach, Sea World, and the San Diego Zoo. Great for family camping!  
Required: Vehicle permits are required for all vehicles and trailers.  
Rentals: Marina rentals include: kayaks, paddle boats, pontoon boats, roller blades, bikes, golf cart, etc. and are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. until dusk.  
Directions: Take Interstate 5 N towards Los Angeles. Take exit 23-A toward Grand Ave/Garnet Ave. MERGE onto Mission Bay Dr. Turn LEFT onto Grand Ave. Turn LEFT onto Olney Street and then another LEFT onto Pacific Beach Dr.

**San Elijo State Beach**  
(760) 753-5091

What’s Allowed: Tents/Trailers/RVs. Sites.  
Fees: There are nightly fees that vary with the individual sites, inland and ocean. Please call for the exact cost. Each site can hold up to eight people. No group sites. Reservations are advised and there is a small reservation fee of about $7.50.  
Description: Picnic tables, metal fire ring (with grill), beach store (closed during winter), and restrooms (flush toilets, sinks, showers). This location is great for swimming, surfing, and picnicking. Nearby there is a reef that is popular for snorkeling and diving.  
**San Onofre State Beach**  
(949) 492-4872

*What's Allowed:* Tents/ RV  
*Description:* This campsite has picnic tables, metal fire rings (with grill), restrooms with sinks and flush toilets, some hot (pay) showers, water spigots, outdoor laundry tubs, trashcans, and pay phones. Reservations are recommended. There is beach access through several hiking trails. There is surfing, swimming, surf fishing, and sunning on the beach. Whales, dolphins, and sea lions can be seen off the shore from time to time.  
*Directions:* Take Interstate 5 N towards Los Angeles. Exit on Basilone Road and travel 1.5 miles south. Make a RIGHT at Surf Beach and follow the signs from there.

**Silver Strand State Beach**  
(619) 435-5184

*What's Allowed:* RV (no tents allowed)  
*Fee:* There is a fee per each individual site (one night max). Please call for current fee.  
*Description:* This site has fire rings (without grills), restrooms (with dressing rooms, flush toilets, outdoor sinks, and outdoor cold showers), piped water, drinking fountain, pay phone, trash can and a dumpster. Surfing, fishing, swimming, boating, waterskiing, volleyball and picnicking are all popular activities at this beach. There is also a blacktop bicycle path. At times, there is a snack bar, beach rental equipment, ice and charcoal available.  
*Directions:* Take Interstate 5 S. Exit at Palm Ave/Highway 75 and follow 75 W.

**South Carlsbad State Beach**  
(760) 438-3143

*Included:* Tents/Trailers/RV  
*Fee:* Approx $15. Reservations are strongly advised (there is no reservation fee).  
*Description:* Site includes picnic tables, flush toilets, some hot pay showers, and a stairway access to the beach. This beach is a great spot for swimming, surfing, fishing, skin-diving, hiking, and picnicking.  
*Directions:* Take Interstate 5 N to Carlsbad. Drive four miles S on county road S21 to the beach entrance.
DESSERT CAMPING

Anza Borrego Desert State Park
(760) 767-5311
200 Palm Canyon Dr, Borrego Springs

What’s Allowed: Tents/RV
Fee: Fees vary per night depending on site, please call for further information. Reservations can be made at (800) 444-7275.
Description: This state park offers a dozen, mostly primitive, campgrounds. There are picnic tables, metal fire rings (with grills), water spigots, restrooms, and some sites have shelters. Some campgrounds have barbeques or fire rings. For those that don’t, an approved metal container off the ground may be used (call for details). Self-guided nature trail leads to a palm oasis and a waterfall.
Directions: Take Interstate 15 N. Take the Poway off-ramp (Highway S-4). Continue on S-4 until the stop light at Highway 67. Turn LEFT on Highway 67. Go through Ramona to Santa Ysabel. Then, turn LEFT on Highway 79. Drive for about 10 miles until you reach Highway S-2. Turn RIGHT on Highway S-2. Drive for about 5 miles until you reach Highway S-22. Turn LEFT on Highway S-22. This will take you through the small town of Ranchita (down a 12 mile, 8% grade). Turn LEFT at the stop sign for ABDSP Visitor Center & Borrego Palm Canyon Campground.

Bow Willow
(619) 767-5311
Southernmost region of Anza Borrego Desert State Park

What’s Allowed: Tents/RV (no hookups)
Fee: There is a small fee per night and site.
Description: Roads and campsites are sand and dirt. There is parking on the sites. Sites have picnic tables, metal fire rings (with grill), and a picnic shelter, water spigot, two wheelchair accessible vault toilets, garbage cans, and recycling receptacles. Just south of the camp, the desert and badlands can be seen.
Directions: Take Interstate 8 E to Ocotillo. Turn NORTH on County Road S2 for 15 miles to the entrance.
**Mountain Palm Springs**  
(619) 767-5311  
Anza Borrego South

**What’s Allowed:** Tents/RV  
**Fee:** No reservations or fees.  
**Description:** Roads and sites are sand and dirt. There is parking available on the sites. The sites have chemical toilets and trashcans but no water.  
**Directions:** Take I-8 E to Ocotillo. Turn north on County Road S2 for about fourteen miles to the entrance.

**Joshua Tree National Park**  
(760) 367-5500

74485 National Park Drive  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277  
**What’s Allowed:** Tents  
**Description:** This site has flushed toilets and running water. This is a great location for rock climbing, hiking, biking, four wheeling, and horseback riding. This is also a great site to see desert animals including: bobcats, jackrabbits, coyotes, roadrunners, golden eagles, burrowing owls, etc.  
**Directions:** Take I-10 W to the south entrance of the Park.
LAKE CAMPING

**Dixon Lake**  
(619) 668-2748  
1700 North La Honda Drive  
Escondido, CA 92027

**What’s Allowed:** Tents/RV  
**Fee:** Approx. $15 per site and night. Open Friday thru Monday. Please call about the small reservation fees per family site, and for the group loop.  
**Description:** Family campsites include: a picnic table, a metal fire ring (with grill), and wooden food locker. Restrooms have sinks, flush toilets, and one has hot showers. Fishing is permitted in the lake from sunrise to sunset. *A day fishing license is required and can be purchased at the lake.* The surrounding area is great for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.  
**Directions:** Take Interstate 15 N to El Norte Parkway. Go northeast four miles to La Honda Drive. Then, turn LEFT to 1700 North La Honda Drive.

**Kumeyaay Lake Campground**  
(619) 668-2748  
Two Father Junipero Serra Trail  
San Diego, CA 92119

**What’s Allowed:** Tents/ RV (no hookups)  
**Fee:** $12/site.  
**Description:** Roads are paved. The campsites are dirt. Picnic tables, drinking water, garbage cans, and restrooms with sinks, flush toilets, and hot showers. No swimming is allowed. This campground is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. There are trails for hiking. A permit and fee are required for fishing. Rowboats, motorboats, pedal boats and canoes can be rented.  
**Directions:** Take Interstate 8 E to the Mission Gorge/Fairmount exit. Turn north onto Mission Gorge Road. Follow Mission Gorge Road for about 6.5 miles to the northern entrance of the Father Junipero Serra Trail. Then, turn LEFT onto Father Junipero Serra Trail. The entrance to the Kumeyaay Lake and campgrounds is 0.2 miles down the road on the right.
Lake Morena
(619) 565-3600
2550 Lake Morena Drive
Campo, CA 91906

What’s Allowed: Tents/Cabins
Fee: $12-$25 per night depending on individual site. There is a small reservation fee per individual reservation.
Description: Lake Morena is a great site for picnicking, hiking, and fishing. Lake Morena is home to many wild animals, including: bald eagles, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, and migratory waterfowl.
Directions: Take Interstate 8 E to Buckman Springs Road. Turn RIGHT and go 5.5 miles to Oak Drive. Then, turn RIGHT and follow the signs.

MOUNTAIN CAMPING

Burnt Rancheria Forest Campground
(619) 445-6235
10845 Rancho Bernardo Road
Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92127

What’s Allowed: Tents/RV (no hookups).
Fee: Reservations needed at some campsites. [Some sites can’t be reserved] $19, extra vehicle over 2 is $6/vehicle, day use is $5
Description: This site has picnic tables, metal fire rings (with grills), or a concrete barbecue, water spigots, flush or vault toilets, dumpsters, and hot (pay) showers nearby. Hiking is available. Only open April-October!
Directions: Take Interstate 8 E to Sunrise Highway. Then, go north about nine miles to the entrance.
Crestline Group Campground  
(619) 788-0250  
10845 Rancho Bernardo Road  
Suite 200  
San Diego, CA 92127  

What’s Allowed: Tents only  
Fee: There is one group tent site, with a fee of about $75 per night. There is also a site reservation fee. Please call for exact costs.  
Description: This site has picnic tables, a fire ring with benches around it, water spigot, vault toilets, and a blacktop parking lot. Only open May-October!  
Directions: Take Interstate 15 N. Go east on 76 to county road S6. Turn LEFT and continue for about 6.5 miles.

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park  
(800) 444-7475 or (760) 765-0755  
13652 Highway 79  
Julian, CA 92036  

What’s Allowed: Tents/Trailers/RV  
Fee: Please call for camping and reservation fees.  
Description: This site includes drinking water, showers, flushing toilets, and tables. There are spots for fishing and hiking and equestrian trails.  
Directions: Take the I-8 E for about 37 miles. Take exit 40 towards Julian. Turn LEFT onto CA-79. End at the park.

La Jolla Indian Reservation  
(760) 742-3771 or (760) 742-1297  
22000 Hwy 76  
Pauma Valley, CA 92061  

What’s Allowed: Tents/RV  
Description: This reservation comes complete with camping, a trading post, a small water park and a slot machine arcade. There are over 700 tent and RV campsites.  
Directions: Take Interstate 15 to 76 east. Stay on 76 until the entrance on the right side of the road.
**Mt. Laguna Campground**  
(619) 473-2082  
10845 Rancho Bernardo Road  
Suite 200  
San Diego, CA 92127

**What’s Allowed:** Tents/RV  
**Fee:** There is a nightly fee per site and a reservation fee. For reservations call 1-877-444-6777. Adventure Passes are $5/day and are required to park your vehicle in the Laguna Mountain Recreation Area.  
**Description:** The campsites have picnic tables, metal fire rings (with grill), water spigots, hot (pay) showers, flush toilets, vault toilets, a pay phone at the entrance, and trash cans. There is a required (free) Visitor Permit. There are great trails for horseback riding, campfire programs, and activities for children, such as guided hikes, during the day. Big Laguna Trail leads through the meadow to Big Laguna Lake. Saturday evenings there are campfire programs given by staff volunteers. Call for more information.  
**Directions:** Take I-8 E to Sunrise Highway Exit. Go approximately 13 miles to Laguna/El Prado Campground, just beyond the 26 mile marker. Stop at entrance for campground information and site location.

**Palomar Mountain**  
(760) 742-3462 or (760) 767-5311  
19952 State Park Drive  
Palomar Mountain, CA 92060

**What’s Allowed:** Tents/RV  
**Fee:** Call for reservation and campsite use fees.  
**Description:** Palomar Mountain is a great location for camping, hiking/backpacking, and stargazing.  
**Directions:** Take Interstate 15 N to Highway 76 east. After about 25 miles, take County Road S6 to the top of Palomar Mountain. Turn left and drive about 20 yards. Then take another left onto County Road S7 (State Park Road) and drive 3.5 miles to the campground entrance.
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**RESOURCES**

**Webpages**
*California State Parks
[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)/
*San Diego County Parks
[www.co.san-diego.ca.us/parks/](http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/parks/)
*San Diego Parks
*National Parks
[www.nps.gov/](http://www.nps.gov/)

**Books**
*Afoot & Afield in San Diego County
_Campgrounds of San Diego County*