

Fall 2008 Hikes in California State Parks

Fall is a great time to discover the beauty and variety of California State Parks – with fewer visitors and cooler weather.

To ensure your hike is enjoyable, it's important to wear proper shoes fit for hiking, wear a hat for sun protection, and bring drinking water. An early morning start offers hikers both cooler temperatures and a better chance to see wildlife. For a safe and pleasant outing, be sure to check the weather forecast.

Here are some ideas for fun fall day hikes in California State Parks:

Southern California

[**Point Mugu State Park**](#) (15 miles south of Oxnard on Highway One) has over 75 miles of trails to explore a wild part of the Santa Monica Mountains. For a short hike filled with ocean vistas, the Scenic Trail leads hikers through coastal sage scrub on a moderate uphill grade. Follow the trail to where it ends at the scenic vista where you can view the Great Sand Dune from above. The trail loops down the fire road for a total hike of three miles round-trip from the trailhead at the back of the Sycamore Canyon Campground. For more information call the park at (805) 488-5223.

[Links to other Southern California Hikes](#)

Central California

[**Pacheco State Park**](#) (20 miles east of Gilroy) has miles of wilderness trails and is a great destination for hikers. On a clear day, the trail up to Spike's Peak (2.5 miles, one-way) offers excellent views of the Central Valley and surrounding Diablo Range. Visitors are encouraged to pick up a (free) trail map by the display at the park parking lot so they can choose their routes in this beautiful (and very hilly) state park. Pacheco State Park is located between Los Baños and Gilroy on Highway 152 at Pacheco Pass. Take the Dinosaur Point Road exit south from the highway and turn right almost immediately at the park sign. (Please note there is no potable water at Pacheco State Park.) For information call (209) 826-6283.

[Links to other Central California Hikes](#)

Northern California

[**Mount Diablo State Park**](#) (five miles east of I-680, Danville, on Diablo Road) has several trailheads at a variety of elevations that offer hiking opportunities, varying from easy walking to moderate to strenuous. Visitors' first

stop should be the Summit Visitor Center where hikers can get an orientation of the park and information about the trails. Just below the Visitor Center, the Fire Interpretive Trail offers a short, easy hike. It circles the summit and is a short loop, approximately 7/8 miles, that features dramatic views of the park and surrounding Bay Area. The Juniper Trail is also accessible from Summit Road and is approximately three miles long. It also affords great views of the surrounding countryside. For more information, call the park at (925) 837-0904.

[Links to other Northern California Hikes](#)

Visit California State Parks on line at www.parks.ca.gov

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