

Top 15 Tips for Memorial Day weekend in California State Parks

The Memorial Day weekend draws a high number of visitors to California's state parks. The natural beauty of our 280 parks is maintained through a joint effort between staff and our guests. State Park Rangers and Lifeguards will at maximum staffing through the weekend to ensure visitor safety.

Here are some great tips for the first-time attendee, the most experienced visitor, and everyone in between.

1. Heat Exposure

While record temperatures leading up to the holiday are forecast to cool for the weekend, take precautions against heat by staying hydrated and avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun.

2. Bring water

Drought conditions have required water systems to be shut off in a handful of parks. Check your park's web page on our [website](#) for the latest drinking water information and park contact numbers.

3. Swim Responsibly

When cooling off, beach users should stay in designated swim areas and be alert for rip currents and sneaker waves. Be sure to use flotation devices, especially with children and on cold or fast inland waters where lifeguards are not stationed.

4. Wear a Lifejacket on the Water

Wearing a properly-fitted, Coast Guard-approved life jacket won't just help save your life; it may also be required by law. For information on what life jacket is appropriate for you and your activity, please visit: <http://dbw.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/LifeJacketInfo.aspx>

5. Alcohol

Alcohol is banned in public areas of some parks. Check at the park for local rules. Alcohol can impair judgment and coordination, making use of fires, barbecues and swimming even more dangerous. If you're going to drink, do so responsibly.

6. Quiet Hours are 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Please respect your camping neighbors and Mother Nature. Sounds are magnified at night, so please turn off radios and reduce voices to a whisper by 10 p.m. In addition, generators also need to be shut down between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6 a.m.

7. Secure Your Food and Scented Items

Leaving your food unsecured is not only a surefire way to invite unwelcomed guests to your campsite; it is also very dangerous. The animal residents of our Parks will gladly help themselves to your food. Please check with the Park and use the appropriate method of overnight food storage (car, locker, etc.). In addition to your food items, the strong scents of your lotions,

soaps, and toiletries will attract animals too. Please follow the same advised precautions as you do with your food. Also, hand-outs hurt, but you can keep wildlife wild. Please don't feed smaller animals and birds. Wild animals have specialized natural diets, and they can become malnourished or die if given the wrong foods. You can also risk injury and transmission of disease.

8. Dogs

Our four legged friends are more than welcome at many State Parks, but it's the responsibility of their owners to make sure that they follow the rules. Dogs must be on a leash not exceeding six feet in length at all times. Please pick up after your dog and adhere to signage on where they are and are not allowed. Always call the Park ahead to inquire of any restrictions on dogs inside the Park. For more information, please visit: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21305

9. Fire Safety

Please contain your fires to a manageable size within the appropriate metal rings and fire pits provided by Parks. Fires started outside of these approved zones are dangerous to you, your fellow campers, and the Park itself. In addition, the use of fireworks is not allowed. For more information, please visit: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/23071/files/campfiresinparksweb.pdf>

10. Parks Are Not a Souvenir Stand

While you may think those plants, twigs, rocks, and leaves would look great at your house, they look even better back where they belong. Removing such items disturbs the natural eco system and hurts the sustainability of the Parks we all love. The same applies for cultural artifacts and historic structures. Carefully selected items from Parks are available at the gift shop for your personal enjoyment.

11. Clean Up After Yourself

Please dispose of all trash and recycling responsibly in the correct containers. If the container is full, please find another one. This will not only keep our Parks clean for everyone's enjoyment, but also protect the plants and animals for harmful items.

12. OHV Summer Safety

In the summer, temperatures can reach upwards of 125 degrees at many of our Off-Highway Vehicle Areas! Use caution and keep hydrated.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=472122342874302&set=a.169098636510009.46001.168493473237192&type=1&theater>

13. Secure Your Spot

Reservations can be made up to 6 months in advance. Summer weekends and holidays fill up fast, so book early and join us at a State Park! While most sites are sold out, some are still available. Please click here for more information on campground and reservations availability for Memorial Day. http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/july_availability.pdf

14. Speed Limits

The appropriate speed of travel changes once you enter the Park road off the highway. Please follow the signs posted and reduce your speed.

15. Keep Connected

For any updates on State Parks, please visit our website www.parks.ca.gov, and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

We hope that your Memorial Day weekend, and your entire summer, is a safe and fun-filled adventure!