



California State Parks

Quick Facts



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The Cultural Resources of California State Parks

California State Parks are more than campgrounds and picnic areas. Within the State Park System are: forts, missions, ghost towns, cemeteries, churches & temples, lighthouses, gold mines, and much, much more.

Cultural Resource Facts

- 235 of the 279 park units in the California State Parks contain significant cultural resource features.
- California State Parks contain a wide variety of cultural resources. California was originally home to the widest diversity of cultures and languages anywhere in the United States. With the influx of many national and ethnic groups after contact between the California Indians and Europeans and during the Gold Rush, this diversity was expanded and enhanced. Representations of the diversity of people in the state are reflected in traditional tribal buildings, historic structures and communities, prehistoric archaeological sites and cultural landscapes.
- A wide variety of collections are housed at California State Parks. They include natural history collections, ethnographic collections and artifacts from all time periods. California State Parks is responsible for 1 million museum objects, more than 3 million archival documents and 2 million archaeological specimens. Farming equipment, botanical specimens, tapestries, Californian basketry, wagons or all types, stone tools, and fine art can all be found in park collections.
- Chumash Painted Cave State Historic Park contains the most extensive collection of Native American rock art in California.
- The most productive gold mine in California history was the Empire Mine, now part of Empire Mine SHP. More than 5.8 million ounces of gold were brought out of the mine in the more than 100 years it was in active operation.
- The Joss House at Weaverville Joss House SHP is the oldest continuously used Chinese Temple in California.
- The oldest theater in California is The First Theatre, located in Monterey SHP.
- Fort Ross SHP is the site of the only Russian colony and settlement in the lower 48 states.



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- Hearst San Simeon SHM has 165 rooms and was toured by 673,449 visitors in 2007/08. It houses the largest collection of European antiquities in California State Parks.
- Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park contains California's only town founded, financed and governed by African Americans.
- La Purisima Mission, founded in 1787, was largely restored by the Civilian Conservation Corps beginning in 1934. It is the most completely restored of California's 21 Spanish and Mexican-era Missions. Today, the mission complex buildings and a portion of its lands are La Purisima State Historic Park.
- The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, located primarily in Anza Borrego Desert State Park, was the first of five dedicated National Historic Trails in the United States in 1990. It was elevated to National Millennium Trail status in 1999. The trail also passes through 22 other state park units. The entire trail totals nearly 1,000 miles.
- Sumeg Village, located in Patrick's Point State Park, is a reconstructed Yurok village with three traditional houses, a sweat house and a dance house. It was constructed in 1990 in cooperation with the Yurok people and plays an important role in modern tribal life.
- Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park is also known as Chaw'se and has been a center of activity for the Northern Sierra Miwok people since pre-contact time. The village site has a bedrock mortar complex with at least 1,185 mortar holes and 363 petroglyph designs. In 1973-1974 the tribe rebuilt a 60-foot diameter roundhouse with assistance from California State Parks. This roundhouse is the site of celebrations every year.
- Wassama Roundhouse is another traditional California Indian building located on State Park property. This roundhouse, used by Southern Miwok and Yokuts people, was dedicated in 1986. It is a living structure of great religious significance for the local California Indian people and is used for social, religious and ceremonial events.