

# 2019 TRAVEL GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA

californiatravelguide.travel

**12** UNIQUE  
REGIONS  
TO DISCOVER AND EXPLORE

**17** CLASSIC  
DRIVE TOURS

+

DYNAMIC CITIES & CULTURAL RICHES  
ROMANTIC GETAWAYS & LUXURIOUS SPAS  
DRAMATIC LANDSCAPES  
LAID-BACK BEACH TOWNS  
MAGICAL THEME PARKS  
WHERE TO SHOP, HIKE, BIKE, SKI, SURF

\$6.95 DISPLAY UNTIL JUNE 15, 2019



# Awesome by Nature

California's natural and cultural heritage is easy to explore



## LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK

Manzanita Lake and Lassen Peak, above, are prime attractions in Lassen Volcanic National Park, which in 1916 became the fifteenth national park established by Congress. The greater Lassen area has been volcanically active for 3 million years.

**Scramble up boulders** in Joshua Tree's Wonderland of Rocks. Time travel on a historic ship in San Francisco Bay. Stand beneath giant redwoods that author John Steinbeck called ambassadors from another time. Whatever your passion, California's 280 state parks and 32 national parks, seashores and monuments—whose mission is to protect the state's natural and cultural treasures—are the gateway to experiences as varied as the state's geography.

### Yosemite & the Sierra Nevada

Yosemite National Park, with its glacier-sculpted valley and granite peaks, is justifiably one of the world's natural treasures. Come in spring when the waterfalls

thunder to the valley floor. Come in summer when the park is abuzz with visitors to explore by tram, bike or on foot. Choose a gentle half-hour hike or reserve a spot for the all-day climb up Half Dome. Junior Ranger Walks are popular with kids. Backpackers can enjoy the solitude of the park's high country and expert rock climbers have dozens of granite walls to scale. Don't leave the park without stopping at Glacier Point with its views of Half Dome and Yosemite Valley or at the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias to marvel at its 2,700-year-old Grizzly Giant.

To see a really big tree—the world's largest by volume—head south to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and

CHRIS FLENTYE; OPPOSITE: VISIT CARMEL; LARRY HABEGGER



MANZANITA LAKE AND LASSEN PEAK in Lassen Volcanic National Park, opposite; Garrapata State Park at the gateway to Big Sur, left; climbing the Mist Trail to Vernal Fall in Yosemite National Park, below.

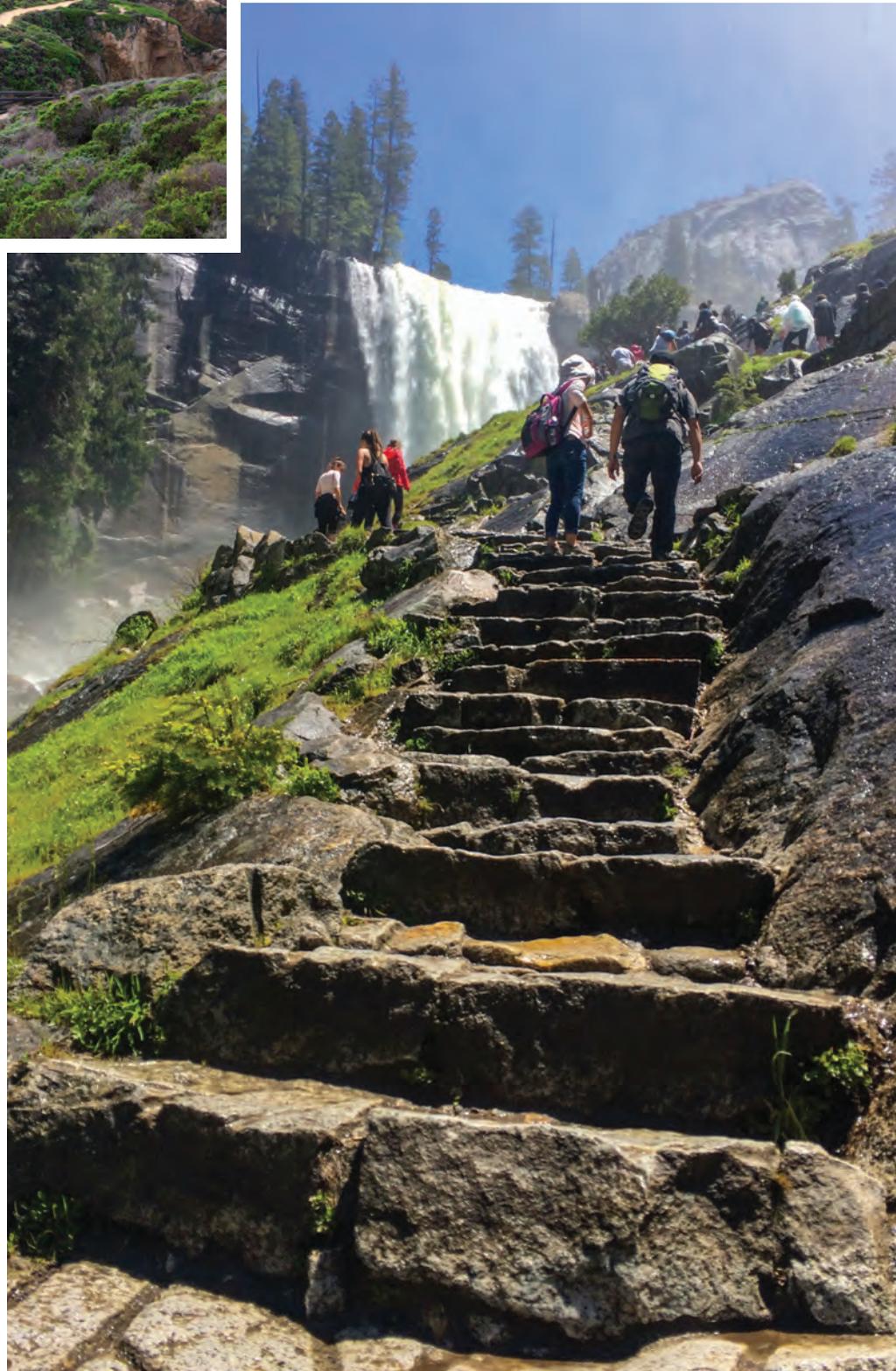
marvel at the weighty General Sherman. While still in the mountains, take a trip to Lake Tahoe, North America's largest alpine lake. Along the lake's west shore, D.L. Bliss, Emerald Bay and Sugar Pine Point state parks offer camping, hiking and white sand beaches. Farther north at Lassen Volcanic National Park, watch California take shape in the roaring fumaroles, thumping mud pots and boiling pools.

### Giants in the Mist

While the Sierras are home to the heftiest redwoods, the state's fog-shrouded coastal range from Oregon to Big Sur boasts the loftiest—several are taller than the Statue of Liberty. These rare trees, once logged to near extinction, are now protected within California's redwood parks.

At Humboldt Redwoods State Park, home to the largest continuous old growth redwood forest on earth, drive the 31-mile Avenue of the Giants and make stops along the way to stroll among the titans. Founders Grove with its majestic 346-foot specimen is always a favorite. Visit in spring to see the pink redwood lilies and purple calypso orchids in bloom.

Farther north and closer to the coast, the Redwood National and State Parks is a collection of four parks with miles of unspoiled coast and hiking trails. The





**Burning Sands & Delicate Wildflowers**

Miles from the coast, California’s deserts are lands of extremes. Vast Death Valley National Park holds the record for the hottest temperature, driest climate and lowest elevation in North America. It is also famous for its explosion of wildflowers after winter rains. For a bird’s-eye panorama, stop at Dante’s View. On the valley floor, walk the Badwater Salt Flats or take an afternoon drive to Zabriskie Point to snap the garishly colored badlands. Trips to Titus Canyon and the Racetrack take you deeper into the park’s unique landscape, but only for those with proper vehicles and preparation. Unfortunately, the winter floods of 2017 closed the road to Scotty’s Castle until 2020. Furnace Creek Campground, one of nine in the park, with sites for RVs, groups and tents, provides a central location for exploring the park. Because of favorable weather and temperatures, fall to spring is the park’s busiest time.

The Mojave National Preserve is famous for its singing sand dunes and seven-million-year-old volcanic cinder cones. Joshua Tree National Park, a favorite with rock climbers, mountain bikers and birders, is home to the gangly tree that gives the park its name. While both have spring wildflower displays, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is legendary. Its flowers are usually the first to burst into color—catching the park’s cactus bloom is the prize.

**To the Beach**

A visit to California is incomplete without spending time on the beach, but not all of them are the iconic white sandy kind. You will find black sand at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park on the north coast. At the Mendocino Headlands State Park, bundle up and enjoy a beach walk with a view of the Victorian village.

Closer to San Francisco, the sweeping arc



tallest recorded Coast Redwood hides here, its location kept secret to protect it. However, you can visit the remote Tall Trees Grove if you have a day to spare and want to nab one of the daily permits. But all the parks provide easy access to magnificent groves as well as picnic sites, campgrounds and trails for hikers, cyclists and horses.

SONOMA COUNTY CVB; MICHAEL STUBBEN/SHUTTERSTOCK; OPPOSITE: SONOMA COUNTY CVB



of Point Reyes National Seashore is home to a dozen beaches, with drive-up Drakes Beach and hike-in Limantour as favorites. Make your way to park headlands in early spring to view the gray whale migration. Edging the entrance to San Francisco Bay, the beaches and cliff trails of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area are the gateways to urban adventures and historic sites such as Alcatraz Island.

Continuing down the coast to Santa Cruz and Monterey, surfing spots alternate with quiet coves that are home to sea otters and seals. Behold the thousands of monarch butterflies that winter at Natural Bridges State Beach. In Carmel, whose beauty has been long favored by plein air artists, Point Lobos State Natural Reserve is a must-visit for everyone. Big Sur's Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park offers stunning views of the rugged coast from its cliff-side trails. Access to Pfeiffer Beach, a day beach, is just south of the Big Sur Ranger Station. The road to Big Sur has reopened after the 2017 landslides but check park websites for current trail and park access information.

At mid coast, rocky cliffs finally give way to warm water and California's famous endless flat beaches. Movie buffs can camp at Malibu Creek State Park where *M\*A\*S\*H* and *Planet of the Apes* were filmed. And then there's Huntington Beach, a.k.a. Surf City USA. Huntington State Beach's soft sand, safe swimming and good surfing make it the California classic.

### Rocks to Castles

California is more than its geography. Living history programs bring the past to life in many parks. At Railtown 1897 Historic State Park, ride the vintage trains that often appear in films, television productions and commercials. At Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park, visit a reconstructed village with a ceremonial roundhouse and presentations by descendants of the Miwoks. The 21 missions founded by the Spanish along El Camino Real, or the King's Highway, preserve the arrival of non-natives to California. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, with its restored plaza and adobes, captures the period when San Diego grew from a Mexican pueblo into an American town. And then there's gold fever. Pan for gold at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park where the mineral was first discovered. Visualize a miner's life at Bodie State Historic Park, an intact ghost town from the era.

No place reflects California's big dreamers better than the Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument, a testament to publisher William Randolph Hearst and architect Julia Morgan. Tour the 115-room castle and imagine the presidents, publishing luminaries and Hollywood stars who gathered there. Also at mid state, climbers and birders will not be disappointed at Pinnacles, California's newest national park.

Whatever kind of experience you seek, from a city adventure to a high country trek,

California's parks have a surprise in store for you. And whatever your destination, always check current conditions and access information before heading out. **CA**

ARMSTRONG REDWOODS STATE Natural Reserve in Guerneville, Sonoma County, opposite top; California suncup desert wildflower, opposite bottom; one of the world's hottest places in summer, Death Valley, above, also contains the lowest point in North America, and this is just 85 miles from Mount Whitney, the continental U.S.'s highest point.

## » FIND YOUR PARK

### Individual State Parks

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

### National Parks

[nps.gov/state/CA](http://nps.gov/state/CA)

### Campsites & Lodging Reservations

State Parks: [reservecalifornia.com](http://reservecalifornia.com)

National Parks: [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov)

### Lighthouses

(many open to the public, some offering accommodations)  
[nps.gov/maritime/inventories/lights/ca.htm](http://nps.gov/maritime/inventories/lights/ca.htm)

### Wildflower Updates at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

Wildflower Hotline

760-767-4684

Or check the park's website at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).