

Secret Picnic Spots in County Parks

Fall is the perfect time for picnicking in San Diego. Leaves are changing, the air is getting crisp, and the ebb and flow of summertime tourism has calmed – allowing us to reset and refresh our daily schedules.

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) oversees some 50,000 acres of parks, historic sites and open space preserves. From North County to South County, and the coast to the desert, there's a park within 20 minutes of nearly every residence in the region – even better, there are literally *hundreds* of established picnic spots that are ideal for a meal outdoors.

If you're planning to spend some quality time in the countryside this Thanksgiving weekend, we encourage you to try something new... Here's a list of some lesser-known picnic spots which are on our rangers' must-see list.

1. Carved wooden bench at the summit of [Volcan Mountain](#)
2. [Lindo Lake Boathouse](#) (open especially for park patrons on Green Friday)
3. Upper deck at the [San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center](#)
4. [Palomar County Park](#), with views of the Palomar Observatory and quick access to the PCT
5. Half-way point of the [Santa Ysabel East Preserve](#) trail (and at the creek crossing)
6. Benches within the Bird and Butterfly Garden in [Tijuana River Valley Regional Park](#)
7. Staging area at [Hellhole Canyon](#) (as well as stopping points at the 1, 3, and 6-mile markers)
8. Stage behind the Tea House in [Heritage County Park](#)
9. Along the nature trail at [Potrero Regional Park](#)
10. Deck from Cabin #5 at [Agua Caliente County Park](#)



Along Old Highway 80 in El Cajon sits [Flinn Springs County Park](#), a 95-acre day-use park with features for kids, athletes, brides – even birders! Pull up a seat for 1 – 500; accommodation is one of this park's strong suites. Another benefit of Flinn is its small collection of semi-private picnic tables, like the one in this picture.

Head over to Lakeside to enjoy a little history with your PB&J... [El Monte County Park](#) is one of the oldest in the County Parks system, equipped with five prohibition-era cement picnic tables. Each table dons a plaque bearing the names of early land-owners and community stewards.

Enjoy your next alfresco dining experience under a canopy of ancient oaks, in a boathouse, or on a historic stage... Customize your own park experience within some of our favorite spaces!