



CLAREMONT

Urban activity and small-town vibe earn college town an A

BY CHRISTINE DELSOL

» EXPLORE,
RELAX,
DISCOVER
Claremont Visitor
Information
discoverclaremont.com

CLAREMONT VILLAGE, above;
sampling the vintage at Packing
House Wines, below.



AS HOME TO the seven private schools that make up the Claremont colleges, Claremont isn't exactly a well-kept secret, but Claremont itself, a city of 39,000 in the San Gabriel Mountains foothills 30 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, is a genuine hidden gem. It's an easy day trip from LA, but Claremont's diverse attractions and ideal balance of urban savvy and village atmosphere make lingering worthwhile.

The expansive views on Claremont Wilderness Park's five-mile hiking loop make it one of the region's most popular trails. But the once-sleepy city has built up an urban energy that offers diversions for any visitor.

More East Coast than SoCal

Claremont Village, downtown's leafy, bike-friendly historic heart, is more idyllic East Coast college town than typical Southern California. More than 150 locally owned storefronts house such shops as the venerable Rhino Records, Heirloom, the Cheese Cave and an array of day spas. The robust dining scene ranges from breakfast at Walter's to the classic Italian chophouse Tutti Mangia. For a night on the town, there's the dinner theater, art-house movies, a variety of pubs and even a contemporary speakeasy.

The revamped Packing House, built in 1909 by the citrus industry, houses its own restaurants, live music, art and cooking classes and the Circus Studio, where aerial

circus parties can be arranged and drop-ins are welcome.

Notable among the colleges' cultural contributions are "Dividing the Light," a sunset and sunrise display of changing colors at Pomona College's Museum of Art (due to move to a new building and become The Benton this fall); the medieval-style Margaret Fowler Garden at Scripps College; and Claremont McKenna College's architectural standout Kravis Center.

Elsewhere in town, visitors can play instruments from around the world at the Folk Music Center and Museum, and view one of the nation's largest collections of fossil tracks at the Museum of Paleontology. Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden displays the world's largest collection of native California plants.

Get Your Kicks on Route 66

Tourists, who are beginning to rediscover Claremont today, once streamed through town on the legendary Route 66. Original buildings include Wolfe's Market, the Old School House (now Candlelight Pavilion Dinner Theater) and Tugboat Annie's boat-shaped restaurant (now Sushi Maru). If you don't treat yourself to Casa 425, Claremont Village's stylish boutique hotel, stay at the DoubleTree by Hilton for a nostalgia trip on the "mother road"—it was Griswold's Inn back when Foothill Boulevard was Route 66. **CA**

DISCOVER CLAREMONT

2020 TRAVEL GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA

californiatravelguide.travel

12 UNIQUE REGIONS TO EXPLORE

17 FAVORITE DRIVES TO DISCOVER

CULTURAL RICHES

THEATER, MUSEUMS, OPERA, MUSIC

+

ROMANTIC GETAWAYS

EXQUISITE CUISINE

BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPES

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MAGICAL THEME PARKS

WHERE TO SHOP, HIKE, BIKE, SKI, SURF

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INLAND EMPIRE

An often-overlooked region of mountains, deserts, vineyards and casino action



BY LENORE GREINER

TOP CITIES

Big Bear Lake, Lake Arrowhead, Temecula, Ontario, San Bernardino, Riverside, Redlands, Claremont

INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

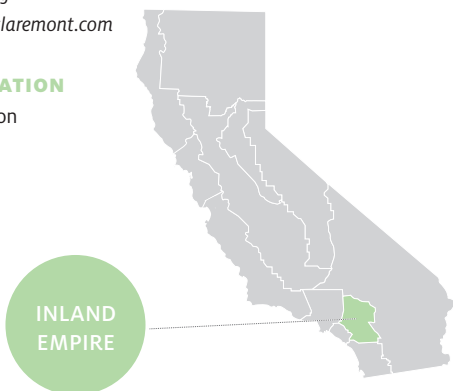
Ontario International Airport (ONT), 35 miles (56 km) east of downtown Los Angeles, 23 miles (37 km) west of San Bernardino, 16 miles (26 km) west of Riverside

TOURISM WEBSITES

bigbear.com
lakearrowheadchamber.com
visitemeculavalley.com
riversidecvb.com
GOcvb.org
discoverclaremont.com

POPULATION

2.4 million



The vast 5,000 square miles of the Inland Empire deftly capture California's Spanish and Native American origins, the stagecoach era and the Golden Age of traveling Route 66. The perennially sunny, scenic landscape and historic sites here reflect Golden State extremes: snow-capped granite peaks of the San Bernardino Mountains to the north and the San Jacinto range to the east fast descend into arid high deserts and, finally, to verdant vineyards and groves.

In the birthplace of California's citrus industry, discover tranquil, scenic beauty among vineyards, hiking paths or ski runs. Or partake in distinctly Californian pursuits: wine tasting, escaping to a quiet golf resort, or soaking in steamy hot springs. The crowds are fewer and the prices are lower than Lake Tahoe and Napa Valley, yet you'll find the same thrills and diversions in the Inland Empire.

The Great Outdoors

For year-round recreation, travelers can head into the San Bernardino Mountains, to two popular alpine lakes. At Big Bear Lake, outdoor enthusiasts find winter alpine sports at Big Bear Mountain and Snow Summit for excellent skiing and snowboarding. Come summertime, the lake offers watersports lovers abundant fishing, boating, kayaking and even parasailing. Lake Arrowhead offers hiking, lake tours on the *Lake Arrowhead Queen*, biking and

VISIT TEMECULA VALLEY; OPPOSITE: EDDIE J. RODRIQUEZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

ice-skating. Or wander in the natural beauty and charming shops of the Swiss Chalet-style alpine village of Lake Arrowhead. Or simply stargaze, watch the autumn leaves turn or the winter snowflakes fall.

City & Town

Foodies and oenophiles should explore Old Town Temecula's historic district of 1880s buildings for wine tasting and sampling local fare in a friendly, Old West ambience.

BALLOONING OVER THE VINEYARDS in Temecula Valley, opposite; renowned sculptor Ricardo Breceda's metal horse rears on a hilltop near Temecula, below.



» **Saddle Up Wine Tours** This equine and wine tour winds through Temecula's vineyards and winery estates until you say "Whoa" at up to three wineries for tastings.

> saddleupwinetours.com

» **Sand to Snow National Monument**

In 2016, President Obama designated our newest national monument, 154,000 acres of San Bernardino National Forest and BLM land jutting skyward from the Sonoran desert floor to the 11,502-foot peak of Mount San Gorgonio. This biologically diverse monument encompasses wildlife corridors, sacred Serrano and Cahuilla tribal sites and 30 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail.

> fs.fed.us/visit/sand-to-snow-national-monument

» **University of California Riverside's ARTSblock**

A cultural anchor in downtown Riverside, three miles from UCR's main campus, ARTSblock occupies adjacent historic buildings and former department stores. The California Museum of Photography exhibits contemporary photography and has a comprehensive collection of early cameras. The Sweeney Art Gallery acts as a laboratory of experimental art. The Culver Center of the Arts hosts films, lectures and theatrical programs.

> artsblock.ucr.edu

» **Ballooning over Temecula** Drift serenely in a hot-air balloon over the vineyards, citrus groves and horse ranches of Temecula's wine country, tinged by the rising sun's golden light. Sunrise Balloons first pioneered these flights in 1975; their capable, licensed pilots ensure a safe float that begins with a mimosa and ends with cold champagne.

> sunriseballoons.com

» **Mission Inn Hotel & Spa** This 1902 National Historic Landmark has hosted presidents and movie stars in this ramble of Mission Revival, Moorish and Oriental architecture, and Louis Comfort Tiffany mosaics. It's authentic, never touristy and worth a visit. Sip a drink in the Spanish Patio under colonnades draped with red bougainvillea.

> missioninn.com



SPECIAL » EVENTS 2020

RIVERSIDE DICKENS FESTIVAL Costumed Dickens characters descend upon downtown Riverside. Festivities include a Steampunk fashion show, a Victorian tea room with music hall performances, parasol dueling and Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig's Ball in full Victorian regalia. February 22-23 dickensfest.com

RAMONA OUTDOOR PLAY Playing since 1926, this tragic romance about the Ponca Indians is America's longest running drama and California's Official Outdoor Play. April 18-19, 25-26, May 2-3 ramonabowl.com

TEMECULA ROD RUN Roaring hot rods descend upon Old Town Temecula. May 1-2 temeculaca.gov/rodrun

TEMECULA VALLEY BALLOON & WINE FESTIVAL This festival features hot-air balloon rides, wine and craft beer tastings, gourmet food, live music and more on Lake Skinner. May 29-31 tvbwf.com

LAKE ARROWHEAD ANNUAL ANTIQUE & CLASSIC WOODEN BOAT SHOW Rare antique and classic wooden boats gather in Lake Arrowhead Village. June; check website for specific dates. lakearrowheadchamber.com

ROUTE 66 CRUISIN' REUNION Classic 20th-century cars roam Ontario's historic downtown in a tribute to the legendary Mother Road, which runs through Rancho Cucamonga just to the north. Sept. 18-19 route66cruisinreunion.com

BIG BEAR LAKE & LAKE ARROWHEAD VILLAGE OKTOBERFESTS These events feature bands, beer and brats at a 7,000-foot elevation. Weekends, Sept. 5-Nov. 1 at Big Bear Lake, Sept. 19-Nov. 1 at Lake Arrowhead Village. bigbearevents.com/Oktoberfest, lakearrowheadoktoberfest.com

Or visit Redlands, the "City of Beautiful Homes," and its opulent Victorians and Arts and Crafts style homes of yesteryear.

North of Temecula, play in the mud or soak in the soothing mineral waters of the 160-year-old Glen Ivy Hot Springs, dating from early stagecoach days. Get in on the action at the gaming tables at the Pechanga Casino. Or soar in a hot air balloon over Temecula Valley's 35,000-acre wine country, dotted with B&Bs and luxury resorts amid vines and citrus groves. Afterwards, relax with a glass of local wine on a winery portico or play golf in this quiet oasis of the California good life.

Heritage & Culture

Riverside harbors a wealth of California history. On Magnolia Avenue, the state's first and oldest navel orange tree, planted in 1873, stands on the spot where California's multi-million-dollar citrus industry began. Since 1880, the iconic Mission Inn has hosted U.S. presidents and delighted travelers with a Hearst Castle-like eclectic mix

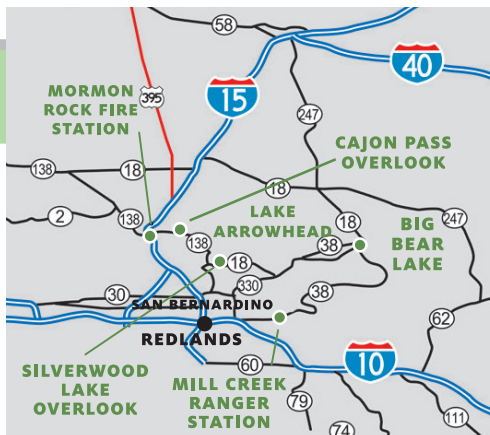
DRIVE » TOUR

RIM OF THE WORLD SCENIC

BYWAY: This 107-mile scenic drive begins on State Highway 138 just west of I-15 at the

MORMON ROCK FIRE STATION. Travel east on 138 to the **CAJON PASS OVERLOOK** for breathtaking views, then east to **SILVERWOOD LAKE**

and the Mojave River basin. 138 merges with 18 along the rim of the San Bernardino forest and provides sweeping vistas of San Bernardino, Redlands and the Los Angeles Basin. At **BIG BEAR LAKE DAM**, follow the road around Big Bear Lake to **MILL CREEK RANGER STATION.** This tour can be done in four hours.



of Spanish and Moorish architecture, adorned with priceless Italian and Spanish treasures, as a church bell tolls on the hour.

The San Bernardino County Museum explores local history by exhibiting a covered wagon that crossed the Mojave Desert from Salt Lake City and a Wells Fargo stagecoach. The Hall of Anthropology showcases local native cultures, the Mojave, Serrano and Gabrielino. Within the citrus groves surrounding the museum, the Zimmerman Citrus Kiosk explores the area's citrus heritage.

Family Fun

The fun begins with rides on the locomotives and trolleys of the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris. At Tom's Farms in Corona, kids can mine for emeralds and rubies, ride a pony, or board the 1800s steam train. In the summertime heat, take cool water rides on the Alpine Slide's twisting curves at the Magic Mountain Recreation Area at Big Bear Lake. **CA**

TREASURE ISLAND AND BOULDER BAY at Big Bear Lake, opposite; Old Town Temecula, below.



INSIDER'S » TIP

Settled in the 1840s, Louis Robidoux's Jurupa Rancho property eventually became a city park, the **MT. RUBIDOUX TRAIL AND MEMORIAL PARK.** West of downtown Riverside, this local favorite has a 2.7-mile paved trail ascending the 1,399-foot-high mountain amid historical plaques. The climb, lined with spring wildflowers or views of the snow-dusted San Bernardino Mountains in winter, rewards hikers with expansive Riverside valley views. mt-rubidoux.org