



PLACES TO HIKE AND CAMP NUDE IN CALIFORNIA

March 2021

Across Southern California, one can find many secluded trails, streams, and hot springs to enjoy without clothes or other people nearby – if you know where to look! Locations and directions were always informally passed along by word of mouth among friends.

A decade ago, we came to realize there were usually a handful of members in every naturist club who would enjoy hiking nude, if only they knew where to go. Several years ago, many of the clubs got together and formed a Hiking SIG (Special Interest Group) that included members from all the clubs, plus quite a few unaffiliated individuals as well. The SIG only lasted a few years, but these hikers continue to communicate on Meetup and coordinate hikes and camping trips throughout the year. Hikers come in all ages, but they tend to be more of college age up to the mid-30's, although we have a few that range up to about age 70 as well

The Hiking Group has no formal structure aside from sharing emails and using Meetup.com to announce an upcoming day hike or overnight camping trip. This style of dis-organization might drive a landed club activities leader nuts, but it fits the spontaneous “what-do-you-want-to-do-this-weekend?” personalities of those involved. The hikers use **Meetup.com**, a popular worldwide event coordination web site, to attract people who enjoy the outdoors that may have never considered doing anything without the encumbrance of clothing, but who are curious about trying it.

For more information, see:

SCNA <https://www.meetup.com/nature-519/>
NitOC <https://www.meetup.com/Naturists-in-the-OC/>
Camping Bares <https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-Camping-Bares/>
YNA <https://www.meetup.com/YNA-SoCal/>

Wherever you hike, remember to follow these five simple rules while hiking nude:

1. Carry your clothes with you so they may be put on quickly should the group suddenly find another (clothed) group on the same path,
2. Always ask permission of other groups to undress if you are sharing a lake area, and never undress if there are underage children nearby,
3. Always ask permission before taking a picture of another person,
4. Always leave a trail, lake, or hot springs cleaner than when you came, and
5. Watch out for Poison Ivy or Poison Oak!

This is by no means a complete list:

Federal National Forests

National Forests and Wilderness Areas have isolated lakes and streams that are the perfect place for skinny dipping. The National Park Service (NPS) is also a bureau of the Department of the Interior. Each of the parks has a superintendent in charge, who also may manage an adjoining monument or a national forest area in cooperation with the Forest Service. It is important for naturists to know who manages what in any given area because sometimes you will receive contradictory advice depending on to whom you are speaking. In general, if there is a park superintendent, he has the final word. Superintendents do get moved around, so just because you had permission to skinny dip in a certain lake before doesn't mean a new superintendent will agree to the same.

Naturists encounter BLM and Forest Service rangers all the time on hiking trails and at remote hot springs. Some are friendly and seek to prevent user conflict by making sure we are respectful of those who do not wish to see our nudity, while others will call the local police to issue a citation. It varies from state to state, forest to forest, and trail to trail.

Los Angeles County

In the **Angeles National Forest** near Los Angeles, we have been able to hike nude since 2006 after a ruling by the LA County Sheriff to that effect. All hikers there are recommended to carry the letter from LA County Sheriff Lee Baca that grants us permission to do so. Copies of this letter may be found at: <https://socalnaturist.org/law/baca.pdf>.

The **Upper Bear Creek** trail is off Hwy 39 above Azusa. While the 3-mile trail is mostly uphill with a couple of steep inclines, it's a nice sunny hike through the chaparral up to Smith Saddle that offers some spectacular views of the surrounding peaks and San Gabriel Valley. You go up to the Smith Mountain Saddle, about 1000-foot rise from the trailhead at the parking lot. The trail continues down the other side of Smith Mountain to Lower Bear Creek, a 10-mile hike if you do the whole thing

The **Lower Bear Creek trail**, a couple of miles to the south, is a completely different experience than the Upper Trail. As it follows alongside Bear Creek, it also offers more shade along the way than the Upper Trail as you pass through the trees growing along the banks of the creek. For this reason, and the fact that you can actually fish the creek, it's much more popular than the Upper trail and is very crowded on weekends, which is why we recommend only trying to hike nude mid-week. During a recent hike, two of our nude hiking members said they only passed two other hikers, whose only comment as they passed our naked selves was a warning to "watch out for the poison oak!"

Kern County

Some of other favorite hiking and camping locations include the Kern River above Lake Isabella. Be respectful if others are camping nearby and it, if so, it is usually polite to ask if they are okay with you skinny dipping before you do it. They may even join in!

Ventura/Santa Barbara Counties

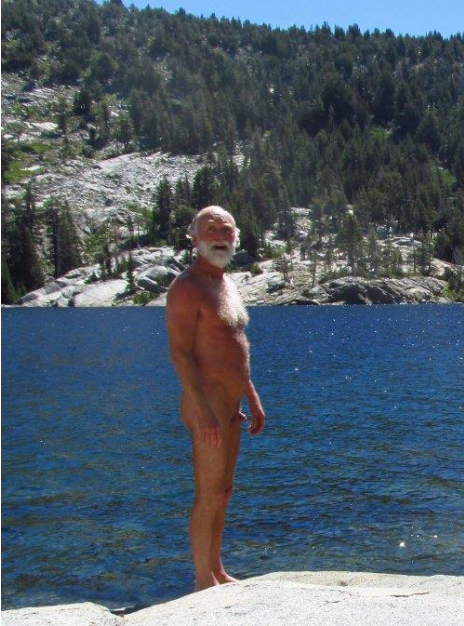


In Ventura County, in the Los Padres National Forest off **Lockwood Valley** Road, about 1/2 way between Hwy 33 and Frazier Park, is the Pine Springs campground. It is surrounded on three sides by the **Sespe Wilderness Area**; such areas are designated "off limits" to 4-wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles, and anything else disturbing to the environment. The campground is very large, off the beaten path, and offers innumerable locations for seclusion. High trees and dense shrubs conceal countless flat clearings, and a long, beautiful canyon is also superb for nude use. Even on a crowded weekend day, you will surely be able to find a secluded spot for your outing. Along the road leading to the campground are many more opportunities for seclusion. Bonus fact: The "Piano Box Loop" is open and barren, serving as a magnet for the off-roaders, thereby diverting them away from the Pine Springs campground. Near the southern end of Lockwood Valley Road is a road leading to **Reyes Creek** campground and more opportunities.

San Diego County

The Camping Bares like to take organized nude hikes in the **Cleveland National Forest** east of San Diego. But the area has become so popular with hikers that it is hard to find a secluded stretch of trail where one feels safe. Around Idyllwild there are a few less travelled hiking trails used by nudists mid-week when the number of other hikers is lower. Be sure to be discreet if near other hikers while nude in this area, as some have been known to phone in a complaint as deputies will meet you as you exit the trail below.

Inyo and Mono Counties/High Sierras



Anytime you are in the High Sierra, there are usually good opportunities for naturist recreation. Whether alone or with friends, on day hikes or extended backpacking trips, the beauty of the region beckons one to remove their clothes and be one with nature. Some like to visit **Trail Lake**, just over the hill from Mono Pass along the John Muir Wilderness Trail. Elevation is 11,000 feet and water temperature in the summer is a chilly 55-60 degrees because it is fed by the nearby snow-capped mountains.

Closer to Death Valley, many have had the privilege of visiting **Saline Valley**. The drive to Saline Valley is not insignificant, about 8 hours from the LA area, much of it off pavement. So, plan on a multi-trip, probably the minimum to make the drive worthwhile. At a minimum, a high clearance vehicle with plenty of spares is recommended. There are 2 route choices, the southern route which includes 53 miles of dirt road, and the northern approach which has 40 miles of dirt road. There are no facilities here at all, so you must bring everything in yourself and take out everything when you leave. There are a few old hippies who live here, who are standoffish but otherwise friendly.

Mojave Desert



The **Rodman Mountains Wilderness** Area of the Mojave Desert is a destination for 3 days of nude camping and hiking each year by a small group of nude campers from the local clubs. Look for a description of this area on BLM websites. This location offers endless miles of nude hiking opportunities in the pristine Mojave high desert where a highlight is visiting various sites once occupied by ancient Indian tribes.

Unlike hieroglyphs, which are painted onto a rock or cave surface, most of these petroglyphs are etched into the rock to form geometrical shapes (squares, rectangles, circles) with dots and hatching inside them, or parallel wavy lines. A few are the recognizable images of a human, a big horn sheep, snakes, a tortoise (maybe), the sun or a star, but most are too enigmatic to identify.

On the valley floor a couple of areas were fenced off, and we quickly understood why: they showed clear signs of being Native American campsites. Black fire circles had been made with the cinder stones, which were perhaps the outlines of huts from long-gone villages.

The wind picks up after sunset each day as the temperature drops. A portable generator is recommended for powering up a portable stove. There is minimal or no cell phone service here, so you really feel you are on your own! Because of temperature extremes, this trip is recommended for early Spring or early Fall only. Contact Peter Connolly at the SCNA club for more information.

San Bernardino County



Deep Creek, 6221 Bowen Ranch Road, Apple Valley, CA 92308

One of the favorite places to hike to in Southern California is Deep Creek Hot Springs. Located in the San Bernardino Mountains east of Los Angeles, it is a 3-mile hike and 1500-foot descent from the car, so it is a tougher hike going back uphill. The seasonal blue, yellow and purple wildflowers on the hillsides where the trail drops down to the hot springs are always spectacular. On most visits, we find a good number of other nudists present – many of college age - who came with friends or other family members. Some of the visitors remain clothed but there is always a live-and-let-live attitude about what one wears, and often by the end of the day some of those dressed will decide to drop their suits and join in our fun. Scenes from Deep Creek were included in the movie Act Naturally a few years ago.

California State Parks

In most California State Parks, nudity is rare because the department's anti-nudity laws are strictly enforced in most places.



One place where there is a live-and-let-live attitude is in the **Anza Borrego State Park**, about an hour's drive east of San Diego. Its 800,000 square miles of trails and wilderness can be easy accesses through the De Anza Springs Nudist Park, which adjoins the park in Jacumba Hot Springs.

Distributed by

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