

Welcome to Ridgecrest!

Ridgecrest and China Lake

Located in the middle of the Indian Wells Valley between four different mountain ranges, this small city called Ridgecrest is the home to about 30,000 people and is a centralized hub for many unique tourist destinations. Originally a dairy farming community called Crumville, which was settled in 1912, this town became the bedroom community for China Lake Naval Ordnance Test Station, which was established in 1943. Now called NAWSCL (Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, frequently shortened to NAWS), this weapons development and testing site is an integral part of United States Defense.

This map is a guide to many of the hundreds of possibilities for exploring the desert and mountain adventures located within a couple of hours of Ridgecrest. For more ideas be sure to stop at the Ridgecrest Area Visitor Center, which is located at 643 N. China Lake Blvd. Suite C.

www.visitdeserts.com

Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert and Historic USO

The HSUMD is located in the Historic USO building, which will be celebrating its 70th year in October. Its mission is to preserve and promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the social, commercial and cultural heritage of Ridgecrest, California, and the surrounding areas of the Indian Wells Valley and the nearby Rand Mining District. The HSUMD also has an active Genealogical Committee that is established to encourage and enable genealogical research, to collect and to preserve the materials of genealogy and history, to spread genealogical information, and to teach genealogical research methods.

They also host community events and exhibits and have a gift shop located onsite. Stop in to view memorabilia from Ridgecrest's past and stop in the gift shop. The building is open Monday thru Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. www.hsumd.org.

To the north:

Beverly & Jim Rogers Lone Pine Film History Museum

If you're a movie buff with an interest in the history of film, the Lone Pine Film History Museum is a must-see on your list. Since the 1920s, the Alabama Hills, just west of Lone Pine, has been a favorite movie set for films and TV episodes including *Gunga Din*, *How the West was Won*, *The Lone Ranger* and *Bonanza*, *Tremors* and more recently *Django Unchained* and *Iron Man*.



The museum is open Monday-Wednesday 10-6, Thursday-Saturday 10-7, Sunday 10-4, closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Admission is \$5 for adults and children under 12 get in free. To discover more about the Lone Pine Film History Museum please go to www.lonepinefilmhistorymuseum.org. Located in Lone Pine, this destination is approximately 70 miles north on Highway 395.

Manzanar

Manzanar is national historic site that has been re-established to preserve the stories and history of a dark time in American history when all people of Japanese decent were rounded up and forced into internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Manzanar was one of 10 re-location camps throughout the U.S. that combined housed 120,000 people from 1942 to 1945.



An Interpretive Visitors Center telling the stories of those who were interred there, preserved relics of the garden, the guard house and the cemetery are part of the driving self-led tour you can take through this park. Manzanar is a national park that serves as a reminder of just how fragile American civil liberties really are.

Manzanar is located between Lone Pine and Independence on Highway 395. Hours for the Interpretive Center are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (November-March) and 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (April-October), closed Christmas. The site is accessible sunrise to sunset daily and admission is free. For more information on the web go to: www.nps.gov/manz. This location is about 89 miles from Ridgecrest.

Trail Hikes in the Rademacher Hills

Take a hike through the hills beyond Cerro Coso Community College, located in the south section of Ridgecrest. The Rademacher Hills Trail is an 8.5-mile trail that extends through desert terrain and is open to hiking, jogging, horseback riding and mountain biking. Most of the trail is closed to vehicles to avoid conflicts with non-vehicular users and nearby residents. This area is within the Ridgecrest city limits, and is closed to all shooting by city ordinance.



The Rademacher Hills Trail is located on BLM managed public land and the trail extends from Gateway Street on the east, to South Downs Street on the west and Jarvis Avenue on the north. As shown on the Rademacher Hills Trail map, there are 11 trailheads at various points along the trail. These trailheads have parking areas where users can access the trail system and kiosks with trail information.

The trail features a beautiful view of the valley for sunrises, sunsets, and after dark when the Ridgecrest city lights sparkle below, and is also typically one of the best locations for wildflowers in the spring. To get detailed directions and information: www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/ridgecrest/rademacher.html.

U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology

Explore the history of weapons development for the United States Navy at this museum located on the Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake.

Located at One Pearl Harbor Way, China Lake, CA. Operating hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed Sundays and selected holidays.

Special tours can be arranged by calling the museum at 760-939-3530 during regular business hours. U.S. citizens can pick up guest passes at the main gate Visitors Center. www.chinalakemuseum.org

To the south:

Red Rock Canyon State Park



Located on Highway 14 just 37 miles south of Ridgecrest, this unusual red sandstone canyon stands out against the subtle color of the surrounding desert. Take a trail hike, have a picnic, see a sunrise or sunset in this picturesque location. The visitor center is open daily, and there are camping spaces and services. To learn more about Red Rock Canyon go to: www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=631

The Rand Mining District

Randsburg, Johannesburg, Red Mountain, and Atolia make up the Rand Mining District, once huge producers of gold, silver and tungsten. The little town of Randsburg is an authentic mining town with a general store, saloons, a museum of mining history, and other small boutiques and galleries. A lunch stop for Off Highway Vehicle traffic (OHV), and tourists traveling along U.S. 395, this location is a fun day trip back into turn of the century desert mining camps. One mile off Highway 395 about 23 miles south of Ridgecrest. (Open mostly on the weekends). For museum information: www.randdesertmuseum.com.



To the east:

Badwater/Death Valley National Park

Badwater is a very unique landscape and is the lowest point in North America at 282 feet below sea level. It often becomes a shallow lake after heavy rains.

Death Valley is one of the most unique and well-traveled tourist areas in California. Here you can find colorful volcanic canyons, sand dunes, the lowest point in the United States, plus summer temperatures that have reached 130 degrees Fahrenheit, and more. Approximately two hours from Ridgecrest.



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Exhibits of cultural and natural history of the Northern Mojave Desert: plus a hands-on discovery area for children. Changing art exhibits in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery: Death Valley Tourist Center and Northern Mojave Visitors Center provide extensive information. Tours of Little Petroglyph Canyon and its world-class rock art are available by reservation. Check out the newest additions to the museum and tour the Gladly Merrick Gardens, which includes a human sundial, labyrinth, and a planetarium. Be sure to stop in the newly expanded gift shop where you can find books, maps, souvenirs, and lots of knowledgeable people who can help you with your travels in the area. Located on the corner of China Lake Boulevard and Las Flores Avenue in Ridgecrest. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily except major holidays. 760-375-6900 www.maturango.org

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Kern County Petroglyph Park

This park located at the corner of China Lake Boulevard and French Avenue is a tribute to the Native American rock art that is found throughout the Mojave Desert. rated with carved petroglyph-like images and iron shaman sculptures that were created by local artists decorate the pathways throughout the park planted with native vegetation. East from Petroglyph Park, this park continues with a dog park, and picnic areas.

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