

# Explore the Great Outdoors in Ojai, California » Where To GO Next!

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Ojai, CA - Set in a picturesque valley filled with lush vegetation and surrounded by idyllic mountain views, the quaint city of Ojai beckons the adventurous traveler to discover its great outdoors and uncover many of the wonders of California. With its miles of hiking and biking trails, premier golf courses, top-rated tennis, scenic campgrounds, and other points of interest throughout the city, Ojai is truly an outdoor paradise.

## Explore the Back Country

Explore Ojai's back roads and out of the way places aboard an open-air, four wheel jeep tour newly offered by Cloud Climbers Jeep & Wine Tours. Visitors are provided with door-to-door service from area hotels and chaperoned in the canopied jeeps while winding through the country roads, dirt trails, secret gardens and even the "challenging to-get-to" exclusive vistas. One of their newest jeep adventures, "All Around Ojai," celebrates the history, flavors and qualities of the majestic Ojai Valley. The tour traverses through historical landmarks, diverse neighborhoods, productive ranches and into the foothills for an off-road adventure to see inspiring ocean, lake, valley and mountain views. The tour is topped off with local olive oil sampling and wine tasting.

For the more adventurous, try rock climbing! Expert climber Ian Potter of Trails by Potter provides everything one needs to take the leap of faith to see Ojai from a different perspective. The climbs are tailored to an individual's fitness levels with all the essentials included such as ropes, climbing shoes, helmets and harnesses. The Su Nido Inn, located in downtown Ojai, offers the "Go Climb a Rock" Package that includes a two-night stay in a one-bedroom suite, round-trip van transportation for a customized rock climbing adventure in partnership with Trails by Potter.

## Take a Swing - golf or tennis

Golf enthusiasts love Ojai. The Ojai Valley Inn & Spa welcomes golfers year-round to enjoy its flowing fairways and challenging greens of this secluded five-diamond resort getaway. Golf Magazine rated the resort a silver medalist winner, and Golfer Magazine named it one of the world's top 100 golf resorts. The course has been host to seven PGA tour events including the GTE West Classic and EMC Golf Skills Challenge. The par-70 course has dramatic elevations and wide fairways providing views of the surrounding mountains at every turn. The Ojai Valley Inn offers overnight golf packages that combine a spa experience with unlimited golf.

Golfing can also be found at Soule Park, offering a spectacular setting with majestic mountain views. The bunkers and greens are varied in size and shape reminiscent of the golden age of southern California golf course architecture. In 2005, Soule Park Golf Club was rated four-stars by the Golf Digest.

Besides high ratings for golf, Ojai is also known as a tennis town, and is home to the longest-running amateur tournament in the country. Dating back to 1893, the Ojai Tennis Tournament has kept traditions alive over the years including serving tea and cookies on silver platters to the spectators. Ojai has hosted legends Bill Tilden, Bobby

Riggs, Jack Kramer, Tracy Austin, Arthur Ashe, Jimmy Connors and other greats. Ojai is also home to the Weil Tennis Academy where students come from around the world to train. Ojai has an impressive 64 tennis courts, including privately owned courts which are used for the juniors during the Ojai tournament.

### Ride the Trails - by bike or horseback

Biking is an adventure in itself in Ojai. Project Ride, a local cycling company, creates an Ojai experience with many tour options to choose from. Visitors can explore organic farms, indulge in local cuisine and learn about the history and people of the Ojai Valley on the "Spirit of Ojai" tour. Visitors can opt to ride to the top of Sulphur Mountain and catch panoramic views of the Ojai Valley, Lake Casitas, Santa Paula and the offshore Channel Islands chain, or perhaps follow the trails of the Ventura River and view over 300 animal and plant species. The beach is also within reach, by following a tour path that leads down to the Pacific Ocean. For those who prefer to ride on their own, bike rentals by the hour are also available.

Another great way to see Ojai is on horseback. Visitors can choose from three local companies - Ojai on Horseback, Western Trail Rides or Ojai Valley Trail Riding Company. Ojai on Horseback has a number of options to select from including guided and custom tour rides along Ojai's scenic trails, through river crossings and paths leading through the orange groves that fill the valley. Ojai on Horseback also has a ride through the tropical rain forest in Ojai offering spectacular forest and mountain views. And, cool ocean breezes are also in reach with opting for the Beach Ride.

Western Trail Rides provides guide trail rides through the Las Padres National Forest along the Ventura River Preserve. Visitors can take in the lush landscapes, shady oaks and dense forest along the route. For kids, the Ojai Valley Trail Riding Company is a great option, with pony rides and a petting zoo on the premises. The company also offers a River Valley Trail ride through the Ventura River Valley, and a Forest Trail ride through Rice Canyon and the Enchanted Forest.

### Head to the Lake - fishing, kayaking, rowing and boating

Ojai is home to beautiful Lake Casitas, providing an abundance of outdoor adventure. Bass fishing reigns supreme at Lake Casitas where visitors can opt for half day or full day fishing excursions. The on-site fishing company, Ojai Angler, provides everything needed for a fishing adventure and experienced instructors who share their experience and fishing knowledge. Visitors can also rent boats or kayaks on Lake Casitas and take in the sites that surround the lake.

Visitors will find 400 campsites around the lake along with picnic areas and hiking trails. In the summer season, the Casitas Water Adventure features a water playground, including a 1,200 foot-long flowing "Lazy River" where visitors can ride inner tubes through a waterfall, under fog filled bridges and jet sprays. The river attraction also includes a separate lagoon and zero depth pool with a waterfall and various water spray features for children.

### Take a hike in the wilderness

Shelf Road - An Ojai favorite, Shelf Road is an easy trail with fantastic views of the valley. It's not unusual to see walkers, runners, families, dogs, bikers and even horses along the path. Starting at 958 feet high, Shelf Road is positioned with the National Forest on one side of the trail and orange groves on the other. Along the way, the view opens up to both sides of the valley making for an incredible vista. There, you can catch a quick

breather and relax on the two benches while taking in the views.

Pratt Trail & beyond - A more ambitious trail, Pratt Trail is a steep and narrow path that extends straight up for approximately a mile to Nordhoff Ridge, where it loops into Foothill Trail. Another 2.7 miles will lead hikers up to Gridley, where it loops back onto Shelf Road, leading back to the start of the path. The hike is 7 miles in total and takes about 4 hours to complete.

Ventura River-Ranch El Nido Preserve - Acquired by the Ojai Land Conservancy, this preserve is popular for hiking as well as biking and horseback riding. There are miles of well-marked trails that weave through and around the riverbed and six natural springs run year around throughout the preserve. In the summer, families can make their way to a popular swimming hole to splash and soak. The path borders the Los Padres National Forest and is home to 300 plant and animal species. Within this preserve is the moderate to strenuous Oso Ridge Trail which loops into the Chaparral Crest Trail.

Piedra Blanca - A bit further out, the Piedra Blanca trail located in the Sespe Wilderness is an easy course up Highway 33 from Ojai. Hikers can stop at the Wheeler Gorge Visitors Center for a \$5 day-use Adventure Pass and continue up the 33 to the Rose Valley turn-off until it dead ends at a day-use parking lot. The white formations of the Piedra Blanca are sight to see. The trail is relatively flat with a slight elevation leading through thick brush to smooth sandstone.

### Getting to Ojai

An easy 90-minute drive north of Los Angeles and 50 minutes south of Santa Barbara, Ojai is a convenient destination for regional travelers as well as national and international visitors. The closest airports are in Santa Barbara (45 miles), Burbank (70 miles), and Los Angeles (85 miles). Ojai is just a 20-minute drive from U.S. 101 via California Highway 33.

Ojai houses a number of unique inns, all offering their own distinct style and close proximity to the city's outdoor riches. Visit [www.ojaivisitors.com](http://www.ojaivisitors.com) or call 1-888-OJAI-NOW for more details on places to stay and things to do.