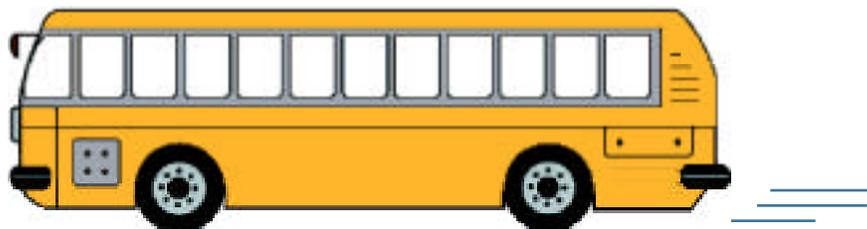


Teacher Feature



Southern California Museums

These are selected California museums (listed by county) that feature earth science; science and technology; mining; and oil & gas exploration. Many are natural history museums that include local paleontology and mineral exhibits. Because hours of operation are highly variable, it is advisable to call the museum before visiting.

INYO

Borax Museum
P.O. Box 1
Death Valley, CA 92328
(760) 786-2345

Located in Furnace Creek, Death Valley, the museum contains an extensive collection of local rocks and minerals. Highlights the borate minerals and mining artifacts from the early Borax Mine.

Shoshone Museum
P.O. Box 38
Shoshone, CA 92384
(760) 852-4414

Museum curators aim to expand this small museum to include exhibits on the natural history of the area. Majority of current exhibits highlights local pioneers; however the collection of local rocks, minerals and fossils is growing. Current exhibits teach about local geologic formations and paleontological collections, which include mammoth remains and casts of ancient animal footprints.

KERN

Buena Vista Museum of Natural History
1201 20th St.
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 324-6350
www.sharktoothhill.com

The specific purpose of the Buena Vista Museum is to promote the scientific and educational aspects of earth history, particularly paleontology and anthropology. This is done through workshops, field trips and other events that educate the public about regional geology. Though the museum specializes in local Miocene vertebrate fossils, invertebrate fauna is well represented in the fossil record and in the museum.

Maturango Museum
100 E. Las Flores Ave
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 375-6900
www.maturango.org

Natural history exhibits that include diagrams of volcanic activity in the nearby Coso range; video about geothermal energy, and rocks of the area; paleontology - mammoth and bison bones from China Lake, mural of mammoths; Pleistocene lakes map shows extent of lakes 10,000 years ago.

Tehachapi Museum
310 South Green Street
P.O. Box 54
Tehachapi, CA 93581
(661) 822-8152

A natural history museum that includes fossils, rocks and outdoor mining equipment exhibits. Also has extensive collection of newspaper accounts on area's history, which include several natural disasters and the 1952 Tehachapi earthquake.

West Kern Oil Museum
1168 Wood Street
Taft, CA 93268
(805) 765-6664
www.westkern-oilmuseum.org/

Artifacts and displays of the area's oil and cultural history. Outdoor exhibits include a working wooden oil derrick and oil field equipment. The grounds are landscaped with native California plants. Original oil industry technology on display. Museum offers group tours.

LOS ANGELES

George C. Page Museum of La Brea Discoveries
5801 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 934-7243
www.tarpits.org

The Page Museum is one of the world's most famous fossil localities, recognized for having the largest and most diverse assemblage of extinct Ice Age plants and animals in the world. Visitors can learn about Los Angeles as it was between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago, during the last Ice Age, when animals such as saber-tooth cats and mammoths roamed the Los Angeles Basin. Through windows at the Fossil Preparation Laboratory, visitors can watch bones being cleaned and repaired. Outside the museum in Hancock Park, life-size replicas of several extinct mammals are featured. Tours, workshops and visiting fossil collector are available. For educational programs call (323) 857-6306.

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
900 Exposition Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 763-3515
For educational programs call (213) 763-3534.
www.nhm.org

The Mineral Science Department serves to develop and conserve collections of minerals, rocks, and gems and to make these available to the scientific community and the public. Their mineral exhibits comprise some of the finest gems and minerals in the world. Mineral lectures and field trips are offered. The Invertebrate Paleontology collection has over 3.5 million specimens in more than 26,000 cataloged localities. Paleontological exhibits include a cast of the largest known ammonite; invertebrate fossils; and several specimens of amber (fossilized tree sap) with insect inclusions from the Oligocene (23-36 my). Another exhibit includes "What is a fossil?" featuring giant oysters; corals; mollusk shell casts & molds; worm tubes; burrows and many others. Guided tours for K-12 classes, teacher resources and mobile exhibits are included in the museum's educational programs.

MONTEREY

Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History
165 Forest Ave.
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(831) 648-5716
www.pgmuseum.org/

In addition to displays on the plant and animal life of Monterey County, there is also a large exhibit on the county's geology, paleontology, and mineralogy. The museum's Education Outreach Program provides speakers for classroom. Group tours.

ORANGE

Ralph B. Clark Interpretive Center
8800 Rosecrans Ave.
Buena Park, CA 90621
(714) 870-8045
www.ocparks.com/clarkpark/

Located in Ralph B. Clark Regional Park, the interpretive center provides an educational view of prehistoric Orange County through displays, programs and guided tours. It also provides visitors a chance to see scientists and volunteers excavate and prepare fossil specimens for study and display.

RIVERSIDE

Palm Springs Desert Museum
101 Museum Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 325-7186
www.psmuseum.org

Among its other arts and natural science exhibits, the museum has various permanent and periodic exhibits of local geology and ancient life of southern California.

SAN BERNARDINO

San Bernardino County Museum
2024 Orange Tree Lane,
Redlands, CA 92374
(909) 307-2669
www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/museum/

The museum's section of geological sciences includes an extensive collection of fossils, rocks and minerals of the region. It also includes a library of geological references, periodicals, journals, and other science literature. The museum holds more than half a million fossils of extinct vertebrates and invertebrates, primarily from the southwestern United States, with an emphasis on San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Group tours, special educational programs, and teacher resources are offered.

SAN DIEGO

San Diego Natural History Museum
P.O. Box 121390
San Diego, CA 92112-1390
(619) 232-3821, ext. 216
www.sdnhm.org/about/ourmuse.html

The museum's extensive mineral collection is highlighted at the Josephine L. Scripps Hall of Mineralogy and in a realistic walk-through mine tunnel containing "pockets" of local gemstones, and in interactive exhibits that explore properties of gems and minerals, such as crystal growth, radioactivity and mineral fluorescence. Locally found fossils are currently exhibited in the Bruder Family Mineral Gallery, and The Parker Foundation Discovery Lab features an interactive videodisc about geology, volcanoes, earthquakes, and a visual mineral dictionary. A real-time seismograph continuously records local earthquake activity, with interpretive printouts and explanations of plate tectonics. The museum's educational department provides lectures, classes, field trips and teacher resources.

SANTA BARBARA

Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
2559 Puesta del Sol Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
(805) 682-4711
www.sbnature.org/

The Geology and Paleontology Hall contains information on the formation and history of the region. Among the unique and important fossils exhibited here are the giant "toothed" bird, a giant toothed whale, and the Channel Islands pygmy mammoths. The Research Library and Archives of the Museum are filled with invaluable resources concerning the natural and cultural resources of the region. The library collections include many important works on geology, anthropology, archaeology, and zoology.

VENTURA

California Oil Museum
P.O. Box 48
1001 E. Main St.
Santa Paula, CA 93061
(805) 933-0076
www.oilmuseum.net

The museum presents both permanent and changing exhibits. The permanent exhibits explain the workings of the petroleum industry and its history in California.

The changing exhibits focus on art, history, and science and are presented throughout the year. Please call for schedules. The workings of the oil business are explained through video programs, interactive models, games, artifacts, photographs, and a variety of historical memorabilia. Other exhibits include an authentic turn-of-the-century, working cable-tool oil rig. The offices have been restored to reflect the original 1890 appearance of Union Oil Company's first corporate headquarters. Daily tours offered.

California and U.S. Collections

Public exhibits, some with significant fossil or mineral collections, can also be seen at many of the visitor centers in state parks, national parks and national forests in California. For information, contact the following headquarters:

California Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001
(916) 653-6995
www.parks.ca.gov/

The California State Office of the National Park Service
600 Harrison St., Suite 600
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 427-1300
www.nps.gov/

US Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592
707-562-USFS
www.fs.fed.us/recreation/states/ca.sl



Photo by Bob Ross.

San Diego Natural History Museum amethyst crystals.