What’s Open for Memorial Day Weekend in L.A.?

A guide to the beaches, parks, trails and more that you might be able to enjoy this long weekend

By Brittany Martin - May 22, 2020

As the unofficial start of summer, the three-day Memorial Day weekend is usually all about escape. Hopping on a plane, packing up the car for a road trip, or just stopping by parties and cookouts at the homes of friends and family. With all that off the table this year, those of us who are lucky enough to get a day off are looking for ways to make the most of it—while still comporting ourselves like responsible members of a society. To help you figure it out, we’ve broken down a guide to what’s on- and off-limits for the weekend of May 23 to 25.

Your best bet is to celebrate at home. If you need supplies, many local restaurants are offering special takeout options, and curbside retail pickup means you can finally set up that adult kiddie pool or outdoor grill you need to turn your patio into a summer party zone.

But, if you’ve had enough of staring at your own walls, staying inside doesn’t have to be the only option. You can also take advantage of local outdoor areas for some exercise and recreation. Just make sure you do so in a safe and ethical manner.

Los Angeles County Beaches: You can still hit local beaches for active recreation. That means swimming, surfing, running, and walking. What you can’t do is set up chairs or blankets to lounge in a stationery place on the sand. Facilities like restrooms, some parking lots, and volleyball courts are closed. Unless you’re actively splashing around in the water, keep your face mask on.

Los Angeles County Trails and Parks: If you’ve got a mask on and you’re staying a minimum of six feet from others (13 feet would be better) you are free to go out to the parks and hiking trails. Just be sure to check the individual outdoor space you plan to visit, as not all have been able to safely reopen yet, even though they are allowed. Golf courses are also allowed to operate, though no indoor facilities at those courses.

Descanso Gardens and the L.A. Arboretum: Both Descanso Gardens and the Los Angeles County Arboretum are open, but with limited capacity. Be sure to purchase tickets ahead of time online, or be prepared to show your membership card. Both gardens are limiting visitor numbers, and requiring guests to maintain distancing and wear masks.

California State Parks: Most state-operated parks around Los Angeles are open in at least some capacity, including Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Four local state parks do remain completely closed to visitors: Los Encinos State Historic Park, Pio Pico State Historic Park, Simon Rodia State Historic Park (Watts Towers), and the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.

Angeles National Forest: As of May 16, several areas in the Angeles National Forest have reopened for hiking. Trails now open include Millard Canyon, San Antonio Falls, Icehouse Canyon, North Devil’s Backbone, San Gabriel Peak, and the trails leading to Mt. Wilson.