

Sunday Drive No. 3: Riverside and San Diego counties

Desert Dreamscape

By Paul Zieke

Borrego Springs is surrounded by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the largest state park in California. The drive there from Temecula is a good way to enjoy spectacular desert scenery without straying too far from civilization.



Temecula

The Route

ABOUT 66 MILES ONE WAY

Head south out of Temecula on State Route 79. After 37 miles, turn left onto San Felipe Road, then left again on Montezuma Valley Road. The twisty drive down the steep grade into Borrego Springs ends at Palm Canyon Drive, where a left turn takes you to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitors Center. Turning right on Palm Canyon takes you to Christmas Circle at the center of town.

← Breceda's
serpent sculpture
crosses Borrego
Springs Road



Ricardo
Breceda
sculptures in
Aguanga



History buffs might want to visit the **Warner-Carrillo Ranch House**, located in Warner Springs off San Felipe Road. Open for weekend tours, this 1857-built adobe home served as a Butterfield Stage Stop from 1858 until the Civil War began in 1861. Overhead you might spot sleek sailplanes from Warner Springs Glider Port floating on air currents.

Take in Borrego Springs' most unusual attraction—the more than 100 fanciful **metal sculptures** by artist Ricardo Breceda (many of them visible from Borrego Springs Road), from wild horses to fighting dinosaurs to a 350-foot serpent. Free tour maps are available at the Chamber of Commerce near Christmas Circle Park. More works are on view at his headquarters in **Aguanga**, about 19 miles east of Temecula.

The **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitors Center** is a good place to find out about road conditions, the area's history, desert plants and animals, and hikes, including **The Slot**, a 0.8-mile trek through a narrow siltstone canyon. If you have four-wheel drive, the views from **Font's Point** just east of town are breathtaking.

Picnic Place Christmas Circle Park is a slice of green in a sea of desert brown. Located in the center of Borrego Springs' traffic circle, it has a grassy area, restrooms, and picnic tables.

↖ The Slot



LESLIE YAP

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