

THE FALL GUIDE

San Diego Edition for Military



Fall in San Diego means pumpkin patches, apple pie in Julian, and festivals all over the county, all an easy drive from base.

PUMPKIN PATCHES

————— *San Diego*



5 PUMPKIN PATCHES IN SAN DIEGO WORTH THE DRIVE

Fall in San Diego looks different from fall back East, and that is part of the fun. Whether you just PCS'd in or you have been stationed here a while, these pumpkin patches get you off base and away from the beach, AND make some core memories with your kids.

Here are a few of my favorite spots:

Oma's Family Farm, Lakeside

14950 El Monte Rd

Sept 26 to Oct 31 (Thu to Sat, 9am to 8pm)

Hayrides, a petting zoo, a haymaze, and games. Reserve tickets online before you go.

Bates Nut Farm, Valley Center

15954 Woods Valley Rd

Sept 17 to Oct 31

A classic farm patch with hayrides, animals, and pumpkins of every size. Leashed dogs welcome.

PUMPKIN PATCHES

————— *San Diego*



Pumpkin Station, Mission Valley
1288 Camino Del Rio N

Patch plus carnival: rides, slides, and a petting zoo.

Mr. Jack O'Lanterns, Clairemont
3901 Clairemont Dr
Sept 25 to Oct 31

A boutique patch with classic pumpkins and seasonal décor.

Goff Family Pumpkin Patch, Liberty Station
2830 Perry Rd

Through Oct 31 (Sun to Thu 9am to 8pm, Fri to Sat 9am to 9pm)
Free admission, great photo ops, and a real community feel. An
easy stop for Point Loma families.

LOCAL FAVORITE SPOTS

————— *Desserts, Dining, and Drinks*

Desserts

The Habibi Sweets
Al Sultan Baklava & Bakery
M & M Patisserie
Donut Panic (San Carlos)



Dining

Dolci Cafe Italiano
Belén Artisan Kitchen (La Mesa)
Brunch in La Mesa Village

Drinks

BNS Brewing & Distillery (Santee)
Burning Beard Brewing (El Cajon)
Cactus Star Vineyard (Ramona)
Forgotten Barrel Winery (Escondido)





MILITARY FALL FUN CHECKLIST

————— *San Diego*

Grab a pumpkin spice latte at Public Square Coffee House (La Mesa) or Manzanita Roasting Company (El Cajon)

Treat yourself to a warm pastry at Belén Artisan Kitchen (La Mesa) or Donut Panic (San Carlos)

Sip a seasonal beer at BNS Brewing & Distillery (Santee) or Burning Beard Brewing (El Cajon)

Pick pumpkins and take family photos at Oma's Family Farm (Lakeside) or Bates Nut Farm (Valley Center)

Catch an outdoor concert at Sycuan Live & Up Close

Hike Cowles Mountain, Mission Trails Regional Park, or Crest Canyon Trail in the cooler weather

Stroll La Mesa Village for fall pop up markets, antiques, and brunch

Visit El Cajon's HauntFest on Main (Oct 16) for spooky season fun
Day trip to Julian for apple picking, fresh cider, and the famous apple pie

Taste local wine at Cactus Star Vineyard (Ramona) or Forgotten Barrel Winery (Escondido)

Pack a fall picnic at Harry Griffen Park (La Mesa) or Santee Lakes and let the kids feed the ducks

Take a scenic drive through Cuyamaca Rancho State Park for fall color and mountain views



LOCAL FARMS

———— San Diego

Oma's Family Farm, Lakeside

14950 El Monte Rd

The full fall experience: hayrides, a petting zoo, a haymaze, and games. Open Thu to Sat through Oct 31. Reserve tickets online.



Bates Nut Farm, Valley Center

15954 Woods Valley Rd

Sept 17 to Oct 31

A must for families new to San Diego: a classic farm patch with hayrides, animals, and pumpkins of every size. Leashed dogs welcome.



SEASONAL EVENTS

San Diego Festivals



The La Jolla Art & Wine Festival (LJAWF)

returns to downtown La Jolla

October 10, and Sunday, October 11, 2026

Showcasing prestigious art, regional and international wines, craft beer and spirits, and family-friendly fun!

The Garden Goes Batty: Return of the Bat

Saturday, October 17, 2026

An evening for the whole family

The Water Conservation Garden

12122 Cuyamaca College Dr W

El Cajon, CA 92019



SEASONAL EVENTS

———— San Diego

Festivals

Kids Free San Diego

Date: Oct. 1 to 31, 2026

Where: Attractions, hotels, and restaurants countywide

What: Back for its 15th year. Kids get free deals at participating spots all month. A great month to explore your new duty station.



Autumn Festival, Safari Park

Date: Saturdays and Sundays in October

Where: San Diego Zoo Safari Park, Escondido

What: Weekend fall festivities at the Safari Park. Ask about military admission before you go.

SEASONAL EVENTS

———— San Diego

**DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS, OLD TOWN
SEPT 1 TO NOV 2, 2026 | FREE**

La Experiencia fills the Fiesta de Reyes plaza in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park with Catrinas, altars, marigolds, and decorated skulls, with new lighting this year. Go during the day, then come back after sunset to see it lit up. Free and family friendly. Fiesta de Reyes, 754 Calhoun St.



COFFEE SHOPS

———— San Diego



La Mesa

Public Square Coffee House

A cozy, community feel cafe. They roast in house and serve great scones and artisan pastries.

Lightbulb Coffee

Fresh baked goods, locally roasted coffee, and a bright, airy space.

Also in La Mesa

Better Buzz Coffee

A local favorite with bold flavors and a loyal following. Bonus stop nearby: warm pastries at Belén Artisan Kitchen before a stroll through La Mesa Village.

COFFEE SHOPS

————— *San Diego*



El Cajon + Lakeside Shaghf Café

A newer spot bringing Arab coffee culture and specialty drinks to El Cajon. Also try KaffeeMeister in the El Cajon and Lakeside area for a drive thru and a relaxed café feel.

More East County Picks Manzanita Roasting Company

El Cajon's local roaster and a good pick for your first pumpkin spice latte of the season.

Donut Panic, San Carlos

Warm donuts and pastries, close to the Cowles Mountain trailhead for a post hike treat.



FALL ROAD TRIPS

————— *San Diego*

Julian, CA

Travel time: about 1 hour east

Known for: apple pie, fall colors, and small town mountain charm.

Check out: Julian Pie Company for a warm slice of Dutch apple pie, then wander Main Street. Walkable, family friendly, and full of cozy cafes and antique shops.

Palm Springs, CA

Travel time: about 2.5 hours northeast

Known for: mid century modern architecture, desert scenery, and poolside downtime.

Check out: the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, which climbs to 8,500 feet for big mountain views and hiking trails.

Temecula, CA

Travel time: about 1.5 hours north

Known for: rolling vineyards, hot air balloons, and wine country.

Check out: Callaway Vineyard & Winery for tastings and views, then stroll Old Town Temecula. An easy weekend away for couples or friends.



WHY MILITARY FAMILIES WORK WITH ME



I have been in your shoes. My family served in the Coast Guard for 22 years, and we bought and sold homes in 3 states on orders. I have spent 20+ years helping military families buy and sell.

I know San Diego: Coronado, Point Loma, Imperial Beach, Chula Vista, North Park, Tierra Santa, and more. As an MRP (Military Relocation Professional), I know VA loans, BAH, and PCS timelines.

I make house hunting from afar easy with video tours and boots on the ground updates. **PLUS** I was doing this pre-COVID.

I break everything down in plain English, so you know where you stand at every step.



YOUR NEXT STEP:
Book your strategy call with me today!
Let's talk about your BAH, PCS date,
and the right neighborhood for your family.

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Book a Call :