

el Capitan Canyon

Nature Lodging on the California Coast

FACT SHEET

Overview

[El Capitan Canyon](#), just north of Santa Barbara along an unspoiled stretch of the California coast, is renowned as an all-season comfort camping destination. Originally a traditional campground, El Capitan Canyon reopened in 2002 as an upscale, outdoor destination and quickly became known for its picturesque canvas safari tents and contemporary rustic cedar cabins. It was one of the first to be coined “luxury camping.”

Nestled against the Los Padres National Forest with access to 3,500 acres of pristine nature preserve, the Canyon is set on 350 acres of rolling hills and creek canyons and is a five-minute walk to El Capitan State Beach. During the summer months, the Canyon becomes a place for families to reconnect as it offers a no-fuss, back-to-nature camp experience with s’mores by the fire, hiking, and outdoor concerts. In the fall, couples arrive for a romantic getaway and groups come here for retreats, corporate think-tanks or relaxed fall weddings. Family-owned since 1975, El Capitan Canyon provides affordable luxury in nature.



Accommodations

Set amidst a grove of California oaks and sycamore trees are 109 individual cedar cabins and 26 canvas safari tents. These comfortable cabins and tents are arranged in villages.

[Cedar Cabins](#) feature spacious decks, full bathrooms and kitchenettes. Many have fireplaces. Guests can choose from a Creekside King with soaking tub, Canyon Suite, Canyon Loft, Creekside and Canyon Queens--which include a sleeping loft, Creekside Double with soaking tub, and Canyon Bunk cabins. All cabins include linens, duvets, towels, picnic tables, grills and fire pits. Rates range \$185 – \$350.



[Classic Canvas Safari Tents](#): 12' x 14' safari tents built on raised wooden decks have screened windows and doors with zip-down flaps. All feature a queen-size or two double beds, electric lamps, heaters, bed linens and towels. Bathroom facilities with showers are located nearby. Rates range \$135 – \$155.

[Safari Cabin Suite](#), the Canyon’s most private accommodation, is set on a hillside offering expansive ocean vistas. This two-bedroom retreat features a designer kitchen, living room with fireplace, a master bedroom with fireplace, bathroom and outdoor shower, second bedroom and bathroom, and wraparound deck with barbeque grill, outdoor dining area, lounge chairs and fire pit. Rate ranges \$695 – \$795.

Family and couples [packages](#) combine accommodations with on-site or nearby activities.

Spa Camping

In 2008, El Capitan Canyon opened its first Spa Cabin and tent. The [spa program](#) has since expanded to include two spa tents, outdoor treatment areas and showers. True to the outdoor experience the Canyon is known for, the spa area is inviting, restful and set beside a stream under a leafy canopy. The surrounding gardens are planted with herbs and native flowering scrubs.

Treatments are offered in the cedar Spa Cabin, or for an alfresco experience, an airy canvas tent. Spa treatments can also be arranged in the privacy of guests' accommodations for a minimal added fee.



The spa menu features a range of options from couple's treatments to specialized hot stone massage and trigger point therapy. Treatments range \$105 – \$155.

Green Practices

With such a setting, environmental stewardship is inherent at the Canyon. The Canyon has several [environmental programs](#) with the goal to help restore, preserve and protect its lands and waterways. Below is a summary.

The watershed **Native Vegetation Enhancement Project** creates and re-establishes the riparian buffer zone with native plant biodiversity. At the onsite nursery, plants are grown from hand-collected seeds, cuttings and transplanted propagates of local Canyon stock.

Through the Canyon's **Steelhead Habitat Restoration Program**, the creek that winds through the Canyon floor is being restored to encourage a return of California's once thriving Steelhead fish population. The Canyon continues to work with local environmental and wildlife groups on this project.

The **Urban Timber Salvage and Recycling Program** gives new life to fallen trees. When winter storms or old age brings an end to a tree, it is brought to the El Capitan Canyon Workshop and made into handmade picnic tables, post and rail fencing, stairs, hand rails, signs and even the interior features.

As part of the **Canyon Renewable Energy Project**, the Canyon converted the pool heating system to solar. El Capitan Canyon cut its heating expenses by an estimated 75 percent using free and renewable energy from the sun.

The **Collective Cooperation Water Conservation** encourages El Capitan Canyon guests to participate in simple but effective water saving techniques.

Car Free Canyon is a program to encourage safety for pedestrians and wildlife, while reducing noise and air pollution. El Capitan Canyon's complimentary shuttle service, utilizing electric and gas vehicles as well as bicycles, offer quick transportation throughout the canyon. The Canyon is a smoke-free environment and observes quiet time between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Canyon Market & Cafe

The Canyon Market & Café, an unassuming country store, offers one of the largest retail selections of wines from the nearby wine region, as well as signature wear, retail/sundry items, toys and gifts. The Café also has a nutritious, organic menu of gourmet breakfast, lunch and dinner items. Popular among guests are the s'mores kits for fire-side evenings. There are also Grill Dining Kits, which can be ordered in advance, inclusive of main entrees, such as marinated steak or fresh fish, plus appetizing side dishes. For a little extra, a "Camp Butler" grills and serves your outdoor meal.

New in 2010, the Canyon introduced Friday Night by Firelight dinner, a three-course plated dinner served in a reserved seating area adjacent to the Canyon Market.



Activities

The Canyon's [activities](#) are focused on the great outdoors and highlight education and preservation.

Throughout the year, guests explore the nearby beach, hiking trails, bike paths or take advantage of the heated swimming pool. Bikes are available on a complimentary basis, first come first serve. There are also scheduled activities including yoga, story-telling, botanical hikes, a ropes course and stargazing.

Day Tours: The Canyon can arrange tours to local wineries, whale watching (seasonal), golf at neighboring oceanfront courses, trips to the Monarch Butterfly Park, and guided hikes through the state park trails that encircle the Canyon. Staff can also arrange kayaking, sunset cruises, horse riding, mountain biking, rock climbing and day sailing, among other local activities.

Entertainment: On-site activities at the Canyon include a popular Saturday night outdoor Summer Concert Series and barbecue buffet dinner under the stars; Thursday night outdoor movies; and feeding the Canyon's llamas and goats with Larry, the resident farm historian.

Groups, Reunions & Weddings

El Capitan Canyon is idyllic for small to [mid-sized meetings, reunions, incentives and weddings](#) with its light-filled yurts and hillside tent lodges. The Canyon's sales and catering staff can arrange conference and social events. From day to evening events, from a casual setting to a more formal or themed affair with white linens and fine china, all details are easily handled.

Getting There

Take Ventura Freeway (Highway 101) and exit at El Capitan Beach. El Capitan Canyon is 10 minutes from [Santa Barbara Airport](#), serviced by Alaska Air, American Airlines, Delta, Horizon Air, United Express and US Airways. Also nearby is the Amtrak station. Shuttle service from the airport or train station to the Canyon can easily be arranged.

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