

China Camp

State Park



Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(415) 456-0766**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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China Camp State Park

101 Peacock Gap Trail

San Rafael, CA 94901

(415) 456-0766

www.parks.ca.gov/chinacamp

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*San Pablo Bay's
intertidal salt marshlands
provide ideal habitat
for grass shrimp and
shorebirds near the
remnants of a former
Chinese fishing village.*



Magnificent panoramic views and miles of multi-use trails greet visitors to **China Camp State Park**. History buffs, water enthusiasts, hikers, cyclists, and equestrians will all find unforgettable experiences here.

PARK HISTORY

Native People

The indigenous Coast Miwok people first settled in what is now Marin County thousands of years ago. Each village had dome-shaped pole homes thatched with grass and tule, with eight to ten people living in each home. Larger settlements also had a sweathouse and a dance house.

The Miwok hunted and fished only for what they consumed. Coast Miwok baskets and clamshell disk beads were traded with other tribes for needed items, such as volcanic obsidian from the Southern Pomo to make sharp tools.

European Settlement

Explorer Sir Francis Drake called the Miwok “peaceful and loving” when he met them in 1579. The Miwok population declined after Mission San Francisco de Asís was established in nearby San Francisco in 1776; its sister mission, San Rafael Arcangel, was built in 1817. The mission system drastically changed the traditional lifestyle of the native people. By 1900, few were left of an estimated 2,000 Miwok just a century earlier. Today some Miwok descendants still live in the area.



The Grace Quan

The Coast Miwok land at Point San Pedro was eventually taken from them through a Spanish land grant called Rancho San Pedro, Santa Margarita y las Gallinas. The grant was given to Timothy Murphy. After Murphy's death in 1850, that land was divided and sold to the McNear family, the owners until the mid-1900s. A portion of the property that is now the park's Back Ranch Meadows area was used as the McNear family's dairy and grazing land.

Chinese Fishing Village

After the gold rush and the completion of the transcontinental railroad, demand for Chinese laborers abated. The Chinese had to find other work. The McNears leased some land to a man who sublet it to Chinese shrimp fishermen. Most of these fishermen had come from Canton in the maritime province of Kwantung, China. By the early 1880s, China Camp was one of many coastal fishing villages in the bay area, with nearly 500 residents. San Pablo Bay's mud flats provided an ideal grass-shrimping location. Nearly three million pounds of shrimp were caught each year, dried, and exported to China.

Despite its successes, China Camp's population began to decline after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which forbade new Chinese laborers to come to the U.S. Perhaps the population loss was influenced by the eventual outlawing of shrimp export and the type of nets used by the Chinese. A few Chinese

were able to continue harvesting shrimp, aided by a new net designed in 1924 by Berkeley restaurateur Frank Spenger. Villager Quan Hock Quock had come from San

Francisco to run a seaside general store here; his sons Henry and George Quan were the last fishermen left at China Camp. Quan Hock Quock's grandson, Frank Quan, still lives here.

The redwood and fir reproduction Chinese junk *Grace Quan*, named after Frank's mother, was built in 2003 by the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park and dedicated volunteers, with support from China Camp State Park staff.

NATURAL HISTORY

More than 100 acres of tidal marsh at China Camp represent transitional wetlands at the edge of San Francisco Bay. Brackish seawater marsh makes up the park's marine habitat, home to the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and California clapper rail.

Surrounding the marsh are several other habitats. Native grassland, mixed



Frank Quan mending a fish net, 1941

evergreen forest, oak woodland, and chaparral lead to a ridge dotted with coast live oak, California black oak, manzanita, and madrone trees.

Spring brings profuse wildflowers. Broad meadows fill with lupine, blue-eyed grass, and Indian paintbrush. California milkwort, buckeye, and orange sticky monkeyflower bloom on hillsides in summertime.

Birders may see chickadees, spotted towhees, and black phoebes in the park or shorebirds gliding along thermal drafts.

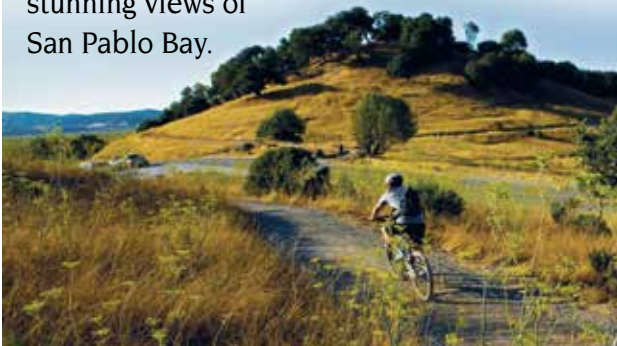
CLIMATE

China Camp's winter temperatures stay in the 50s while summer temperatures can range from the 70s to over 100 degrees. The park's ridges keep coastal fog at bay, giving the park over 200 sunny days each year.

RECREATION

China Camp Village, the historic center of the park, has a museum with exhibits of early Chinese settlement. The village is on a family-friendly swimming beach with picnic tables and easy launch of kayaks and paddle boards.

Day Use—The park has 15 miles of popular hiking, equestrian and cycling trails with stunning views of San Pablo Bay.



Picnic sites with tables and barbecues are located at scenic China Camp Point, Bullhead Flat, Miwok Meadows, Weber Point, and Buckeye Point.

Camping

Back Ranch Meadows has 33 developed walk-in campsites and two hike-and-bike sites for year-round tent camping only. Visitors must transport all equipment from the parking lot to the campsites—up to 300 yards. Wheeled bins are available. There is also one group campsite.

Self-contained RVs may camp enroute in the parking lot for one night only, between 6 p.m. and 9 a.m., space permitting.

Reservations—Reserve campsites or picnic areas at (800) 444-7275 or online at www.parks.ca.gov/chinacamp.

Fishing—Striped bass, flounder, perch, and sturgeon may be caught at several access spots along the bay. Anglers aged 16 and over must have valid California fishing licenses: www.wildlife.ca.gov.

Programs and Events—Campfire programs are held for campers from May to October. Junior Ranger programs are held by request. Heritage Day celebrates Chinese culture with activities, tours, and exhibits. The schedule is available at www.parks.ca.gov/chinacamp. School and other groups should call (415) 456-0766 in advance to arrange visits.



Kayaking near Rat Rock

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Camping—Six sites are accessible on hard-packed dirt (in dry weather). All park restrooms are accessible.

Trails—Part of the multi-use Shoreline Trail and the Turtle Back Nature Trail are accessible, with tactile interpretive panels.

Picnicking—Picnic areas may have some barriers; some tables are set on grass.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- All natural and cultural features of the park are protected by law and may not be disturbed or removed.
- Rules and trail postings are strictly enforced in order to protect this unique natural and historic resource.
- Dogs are allowed only in developed areas; only service animals are allowed on trails. All dogs must be on a six-foot leash.
- Fires are allowed only in park barbecues in designated areas.
- Use official park trails or roads only. Do not make or use unmarked trails.
- All trails close at sunset.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Angel Island State Park (415) 435-1915
www.parks.ca.gov/angelisland
- Mount Tamalpais State Park
(415) 388-2070
www.parks.ca.gov/mttamalpais

This park receives support in part from a nonprofit organization. For further information, contact:
 Friends of China Camp
 (415) 488-5161 • friendsofchinacamp.org

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