DAY TRIP TO AGUA MANSA

From Colton · San Bernardino County, California

FARM AND RANCH

Photo: Johnwayne Stroud, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

OPEN SUN–THU

Only the cemetery remains, run as a free historic site by the San Bernardino County Museum.

The cemetery is ten minutes from downtown Colton. Come Sunday to Thursday, the only days it opens, and pair it with a visit to Riverside, where, by Wikipedia's account, the old chapel's bell now hangs at the Mission Inn. From San Diego it's a long half day.

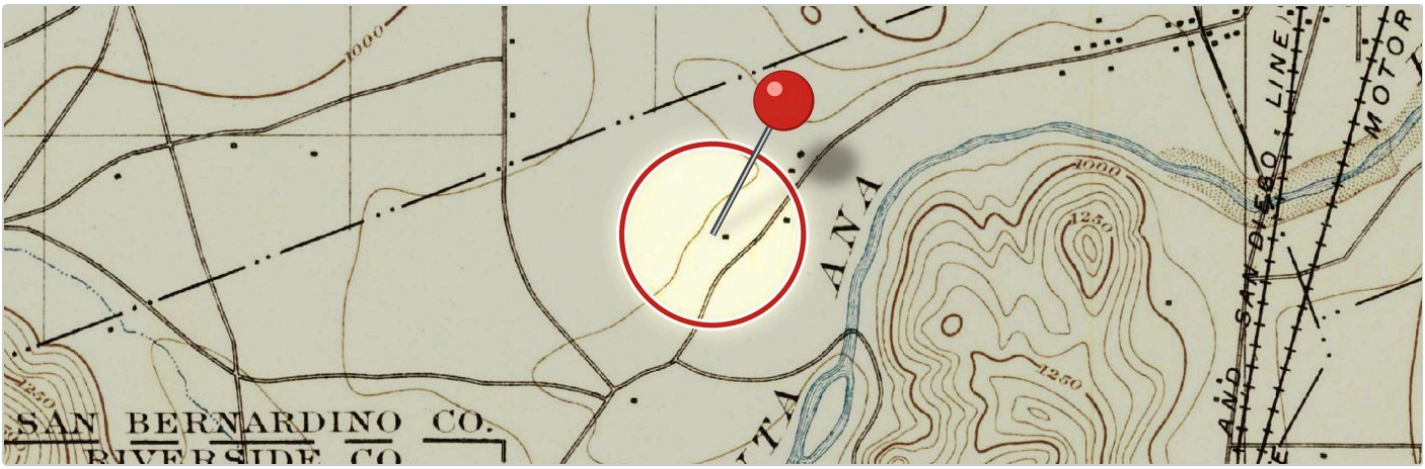
A SAMPLE DAY

- [ ] 9:45 a.m. — Leave downtown Colton on I-10 west, then Rancho Avenue and Agua Mansa Road. About 10 minutes.
- [ ] **10 a.m.** — The cemetery opens. Start at the landmark marker and the replica church.
- [ ] **10:30 a.m.** — Walk the burial ground and look for the few surviving markers.
- [ ] 11:15 a.m. — Head back to Colton, or on to Riverside and the Mission Inn, where Wikipedia says the chapel's bell now hangs.

Coming from San Diego? It's about two hours without traffic. Leave by 8 a.m. to arrive at opening.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The replica church.** The full-size replica of the 1853 church is the main frame. Step back to fit the whole building in.
- **Old markers.** Low morning light brings out the lettering on worn stones. Shoot close and don't move anything.
- **The landmark marker.** The 1961 marker makes a clean establishing shot for video.



USGS topographic map, 1896 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	5 mi, about 10 min each way from downtown Colton. From San Diego: 101 mi, about 1 h 59 min.
OPEN	Sundays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Closed on county holidays, and sometimes for high wind.
ADMISSION	No cost.
TOURS	Group tours by appointment through the San Bernardino County Museum, 909-798-8608.
MUSEUM	The 1978 replica of the San Salvador church is used as a museum.
RESTROOMS AND FOOD	The cemetery page doesn't mention restrooms or food. Bring water and eat in Colton.
RESPECT	It's a cemetery, with hundreds of unmarked graves. Stay on paths and don't touch the old markers.
WEBSITE	museum.sbcounty.gov/agua-mansa-pioneer-cemetery

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Keep out of unstable buildings and off fenced ruins.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 34.04194, −117.36389 · 34°02′31″N 117°21′50″W

Directions Google Maps

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/california/agua-mansa/

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.