



DAY TRIP TO RANDSBURG

From Ridgecrest · Kern County, California



GOLD MINING



Photo: inkknife_2000, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

LIVING TOWN

A town of 45 people (2020 census). Shops open mostly on weekends, per a September 2026 visit. Redrock–Randsburg Road west to Highway 14 has been closed since December 2025; come in from US 395.

Randsburg is half an hour south of Ridgecrest on US 395, and a weekend morning covers it. Come on a Saturday or Sunday: the museum opens only then, and a July 2026 guide says food in town is limited and most likely on weekends. Fill up and buy supplies in Ridgecrest.

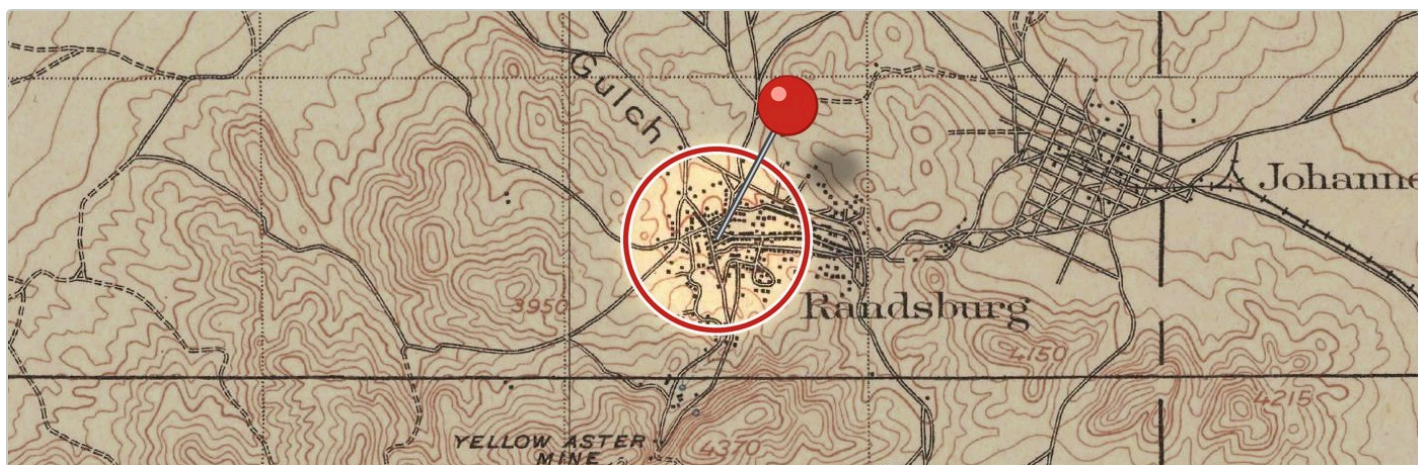
A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 10:15 a.m. Leave Ridgecrest south on China Lake Boulevard and US 395, about 30 minutes.
- ☐ 10:45 a.m. Park on Butte Avenue and walk the main street: the White House Saloon, the Opera House and the old General Store, closed since 2022.
- ☐ 11 a.m. The Rand Desert Museum opens on weekends.
- ☐ Noon Lunch in town if a place is open, otherwise your packed lunch.
- ☐ 1 p.m. See the old jail from outside near the town entrance, then drive over the ridge to the Rand District Cemetery in Johannesburg.
- ☐ Afternoon Head back north on US 395 to Ridgecrest.

Coming from Los Angeles? The route below takes CA 14 to its end and US 395 south, about 3 hours 25 minutes, because Redrock–Randsburg Road is closed. Leave by 7:30 a.m.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **Butte Avenue.** The weathered storefronts look best in morning or late-afternoon light. Shoot from the street; many buildings are private.
- **The Opera House front.** The false front faces the main street.
- **The Yellow Aster's hill.** The road in gives the view of the town spread below the scarred hill.
- **The Rand District Cemetery.** The museum says it has a "post-card view" of the township and the old mines.
- **Drones.** None of our sources mention them. People live here, so ask before you fly over homes.



USGS topographic map, 1903 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	21 mi, about 29 min each way from central Ridgecrest. From Los Angeles: 174 mi, about 3 h 25 min.
WHEN	Weekends. A July 2026 travel guide says operating days "can be irregular, particularly during the week."
MUSEUM	Rand Desert Museum, 161 Butte Avenue: Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and by appointment (randdesertmuseum@gmail.com). Its site lists no admission fee and no phone number.
TIME ON SITE	The same guide suggests 1 to 3 hours, with 20 to 40 minutes for the Butte Avenue walk and 30 to 60 for the museum.
FOOD AND WATER	Limited, on changing schedules. The 2025 floods damaged the town's water system, so bring water and a packed lunch.
RESTROOMS	Neither the museum's site nor the guide mentions public restrooms. Plan on Ridgecrest.
PARKING	Street parking where allowed; there is no central lot. Don't block driveways or business entrances.
SHADE	Little, by the guide's account. Summer heat can be dangerous; fall to spring is the season.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- 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 35.36861, -117.65806 · 35°22′07″N
117°39′29″W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/california/randsburg/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

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