

L.A. Parent™

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FALL FUN
GUIDE!

NAVIGATING
ENRICHMENT:
YOUR CHILD'S
BEST PATH

GROWING
LEADERSHIP
SKILLS

TUNING UP
AT HOME
WITH MUSIC





We do have fall colors in Southern California, and Descanso Gardens is a great place for families to enjoy them.

PHOTO COURTESY DESCANSO GARDENS

Fall's Here – Don't Forget the Fun

Use this handy guide to find tasty treats, after-school snacks, colorful foliage and crafty supplies

By Christina Jennings

As a new school year begins – with its bulging backpacks, drop-off drama and homework hassles – it's important to remember to fit a sense of play into our fall schedules.

In this guide, we merge the kind of fun that only fall can bring with some school-supply resources to help you navigate the season.

Apple Picking

Skip the grocery store and see what these fun U-pick farms have to offer. Kids will love exploring these orchards, the original source of fresh and natural goodies.

► **Riley's at Los Rios Rancho** (39611 Oak Glen Rd., Oak Glen; 909-797-1005, www.losriosrancho.com) is Southern California's largest apple farm and features more than 32 different kinds of apples. U-pick fruit is currently available on weekends. Make sure to check out the farm's country gift shop, which includes a barbecue, deli counter and bakery.

► **Brian Ranch Airport U-Pick Orchard** (34810 Largo Vista Rd., Llano; 661-261-3216, www.brianranch.com) is open from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on weekends through the end of October. And they don't just offer apple picking. You can find apricots, pears, cherries, peaches, plums and pumpkins there, too.

Fall Colors

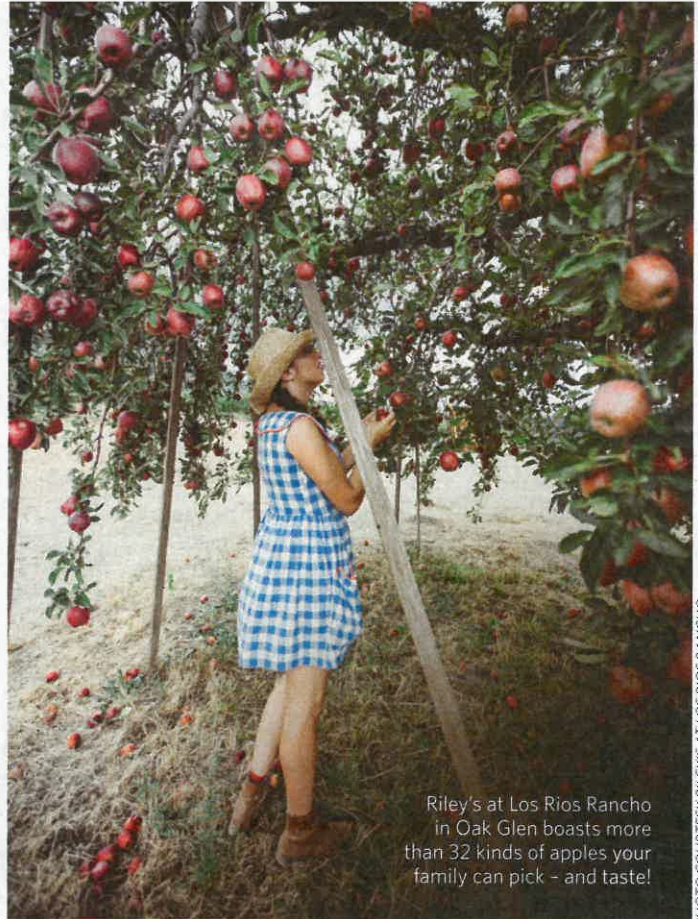
Yes, we have them! Spend the afternoon with the family at these great spots, observing how the leaves change color. Enjoy the cooler air and sip some cider.

► **Descanso Gardens** (1418 Descanso Dr., La Cañada-Flintridge; 818-949-4200, www.descansogardens.org) is open year-round, but one of the best times to visit is during the fall when the leaves are changing colors. It offers tons of opportunities for exploration and wandering, and a chance to learn about plants from near and far.

► **Lacy Park** (1485 Virginia Rd., San Marino; 626-300-0790) is a



Huckleberry Café & Bakery in Santa Monica is a lovely spot to unwind - and enjoy tasty treats - after school.



Riley's at Los Rios Rancho in Oak Glen boasts more than 32 kinds of apples your family can pick - and taste!

breathhtaking 30 acres that are perfect for experiencing the beauty of fall. There are picnic areas, open green areas for outdoor play, and two short, stroller-friendly walking loops. The park is welcoming for pets, too.

► **Big Sycamore Canyon** (4800 Lynn Rd., Pt. Mugu, Newbury Park; 310-457-8143) in Point Mugu State Park boasts a forested loop-like trail that is a great spot to experience the beauty of fall. This trail is a bit more advanced and not stroller friendly.

► **Solstice Canyon** (3455 Solstice Canyon Rd., Malibu; 805-370-2301) is teeming with flora and fauna and is a good place for hiking, picnicking and dog walking. That means you can bring your four-legged family members on your outing.

After-School Snacks

Help kids unwind after a long day at school at one of these cute cafés. Most of these spots offer play areas and kid-friendly snacks to help quiet rumbling tummies until dinner time - and maybe even fuel them up for homework.

► **Snooknuk** (506 N. Larchmont Blvd., L.A.; 323-498-5258; www.snooknuk.com) is the ultimate afternoon retreat for little ones and their families. It features a large, indoor playground, a performing arts studio with daily workshops and classes for kids and a café with treats and snacks crafted with picky eaters in mind. It offers free W-Fi so you can get some work done while the kids are occupied.

► **Huckleberry Bakery & Café** (1014 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica; 310-451-2311; www.huckleberrycafe.com) is a perfect spot to unwind in the afternoon. Children can enjoy classics including PB&J's and grilled cheese as afternoon snacks, while adults indulge in options such as quinoa salads and house-made granola with Greek-style yogurt. Don't forget to try one of their house-made caramel or vanilla lattes.

► **Swork** (2160 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock; 323-258-5600 www.swork.com) is a kid-friendly café that features smoothies, tea, treats and coffee beverages, as well as a menu just for kids. Fun options such as Babyccinos, Cookies & Cream Milk Shakes and Happy Chocolates are great afternoon treats to enjoy with kids before they spend time in the spacious play area.

School Supplies

Getting back into the swing of school after a long, fun summer can seem like a daunting task, so check out some of these spots for back-to-school supplies and activities to make the transition easier.

► **Lakeshore Learning** (17072 Devonshire St., Northridge, 818-366-4105; 3848 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, 626-356-9920; 8888 Venice Blvd., L.A., 310-559-9630; www.lakeshorelearning.com) is a one-stop shop for school supplies, educational games and toys, books, arts and crafts, games, puzzles and subject-based materials for ages 11 and younger.