# What Outdoor Living Really Costs in San Diego in 2026

One-page summary of the article at https://www.kaminskiyhomeremodeling.com/blog/outdoor-living-cost-san-diego/. Kaminskiy Design & Remodeling, San Diego, CA license #922807. Figures as of November 5, 2026; refreshed quarterly.

### THE SHORT ANSWER

A San Diego backyard designed, permitted and built by one team runs from about **$8,000** for a fire feature and **$25,000** for a deck to **$250,000 and more** for a pool and spa with its decking; several pieces on one plan usually land between **$100,000 and $300,000**. The median outdoor living proposal Kaminskiy priced between 2021 and 2023 was **$165,000**; the middle half fell between **$102,000 and $291,000**; a quarter landed under $100,000 and a quarter at $300,000 or more.

### WHAT EACH PIECE RUNS, KAMINSKIY DESIGNERS' 2026 WORKING RANGES

| Piece (designed, permitted and built by one team) | 2026 range | What moves it |
|---|---|---|
| Fire pit or outdoor fireplace | $8,000 to $30,000 | Gas line length; masonry chimney vs. a pit |
| Deck, wood or composite | $25,000 to $90,000 | Slope, levels, railing, lighting, a spa in the framing |
| Outdoor kitchen | $30,000 to $100,000 | Gas, water, drain and circuits; a roof over it |
| California room or covered patio | $40,000 to $120,000 | Roof tie-in, footings, fireplace, matched finishes |
| Pool and spa with decking | $120,000 to $250,000+ | Decking, coping, fencing and alarms; a cabana is its own project |
| Several pieces on one plan | $100,000 to $300,000+ | How much structure, how much underground |

### KAMINSKIY OUTDOOR LIVING PROPOSALS, 2021 TO 2023

| Kaminskiy proposals, 2021 to 2023 | Median | Middle half |
|---|---|---|
| Outdoor living on its own | $165,000 | $102,000 to $291,000 |
| Outdoor living with the house, a kitchen, a bath or an addition | $522,000 | $127,000 to $748,000 |

| Outdoor-only proposals by price | Share |
|---|---|
| Under $100,000 | 25% |
| $100,000 to $200,000 | 31% |
| $200,000 to $300,000 | 19% |
| $300,000 and up | 25% |

### WHERE $165,000 GOES: A CALIFORNIA ROOM, AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN, HARDSCAPE, A FIRE PIT AND THE LANDSCAPE

| Block of a $165,000 backyard | Amount | Block | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| California room with fireplace | $45,000 | Landscape, turf, irrigation | $15,000 |
| Outdoor kitchen | $35,000 | Design, permits, engineering | $13,000 |
| Hardscape: pavers, concrete, walls | $30,000 | Fire pit | $12,000 |
| Gas, electric, lighting, drainage | $15,000 | | |

### WHAT THE NATIONAL NUMBERS SAY ABOUT VALUE

| Zonda Cost vs. Value 2025 | Pacific cost | Pacific recouped | National cost | National recouped |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wood deck, 16 by 20 ft | $18,405 | 102.5% | $18,263 | 94.9% |
| Composite deck, 16 by 20 ft | $26,891 | 74.1% | $25,096 | 88.5% |
| Backyard patio package (patio, pergola, kitchen, fire pit) | $54,965 | 45.8% | $51,454 | 46% |

Buyers (NAHB, What Home Buyers Really Want 2024): patio essential or desirable 86%, exterior lighting 82%, front porch 81%, landscaping 80%. Architects (AIA Home Design Trends, Q2 2026): outdoor living rooms the fastest-growing special-function room, net 51% reporting more demand, up from 40% in 2025.

### COST PRESSURES, 2025 TO 2026

| Pressure, 2025 to 2026 | Change |
|---|---|
| Softwood lumber PPI, year over year (BLS, September 2026; July peak +17%) | +14.2% |
| City of San Diego DSD permit fees (May 4, 2026) | +7.25% |
| Building material prices, year over year (NAHB, September 2026) | +5.5% |
| Concrete products PPI, year over year (BLS, September 2026) | +4.2% |
| Section 232 tariff on imported softwood lumber (from Oct 14, 2025); steel and aluminum duties on the full value of derivative goods (from April 2026) | 10% |
| Composite decking (Trex, Q2 2026): pricing contributed minimally; materials $15 to $30 per sq ft | flat |

### PERMITS (CITY OF SAN DIEGO, AUGUST 2026 FEE SCHEDULE; COUNTY PDS 613, JULY 2026)

No City building permit for a deck under 200 sq ft, 30 in or less above grade, detached and not the main exit (IB-211), or a patio cover of 300 sq ft or less and 12 ft or lower outside the Coastal Overlay Zone, planned developments and sensitive lands (IB-206). Every in-ground pool needs a permit; two of seven drowning-prevention features (H&S 115922), and from Jan 1, 2026 the house wall no longer counts as a barrier. Every gas line and new circuit is permitted on its own (IB-103). Fees: patio cover about $1,942, deck to 500 sq ft about $1,942, custom pool about $3,179, gas line $264.25 for five outlets; all DSD fees +7.25% from May 4, 2026 (IB-501). County: patio or fence over the counter $926, pool or spa $1,221. Decks above 30 in: 42-in guards; stainless hardware within 300 ft of the shoreline; wildland-urban interface decking in very high fire hazard zones (CRC R507, R337).

### METHOD AND SOURCES

First-party figures: Kaminskiy's customer relationship records 2021 to 2026; inquiries tagged Outdoor Living, split into the yard on its own and the yard with the house, a kitchen, a bath or an addition; proposals under $15,000 excluded; median and quartiles on the rest; top and bottom 5% trimmed before the range; shares, medians and ranges published, not counts. Ranges by piece are the designers' 2026 working ranges, reviewed by the designer named on the article. Published sources (read November 5, 2026): Zonda Cost vs. Value 2025; City of San Diego IB-206, 211, 501, 103, 712, 201 and the permit exemption list; County PDS 613; California Residential Code 2025 and the Wildland-Urban Interface Code; H&S 115922; MWELO; NAHB buyer survey, RMI and material price updates; AIA Home Design Trends Q2 2026; BLS PPI via FRED; Trex Q2 2026; Section 232 proclamations; NWS Climate of San Diego; OSFM fire hazard severity zones 2025; SDCWA turf rebate. Full citations on the article page.

Kaminskiy Design & Remodeling, 858-271-1005, kaminskiyhomeremodeling.com. Updated November 9, 2026. You're welcome to quote these tables with a link to the article.