Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

**DAY 1**

**Arrive Las Vegas, Introductions and Welcome Dinner**

February and March are typically excellent hiking, with temperatures in the high 60's to low 70's. The following itinerary may be adjusted because of weather, availability of ranger talks, group wishes, etc. Our trip starts today in Las Vegas. Arrive any time before 5 pm. Catch a convenient shuttle to our hotel, where we will meet at 5:30 pm. We'll start getting to know each other and review our plans for the trip, before sharing our first dinner. The evening is free for you to get to bed early or wander the strip. (D)

**DAY 2**

**Drive to Death Valley, hike Mosaic Canyon**

Today we will make our way to Death Valley National Park, a drive that takes about 2.5 hours. We're headed first to Rhyolite, an historic ruins of a 1905 goldmining town built on silica-rich volcanic rock laced with gold! Rhyolite lies just outside the northern entrance to the park. We enter the park from this direction, through Hellâ€™s Gate where you get your first introduction to the complex geology of the area. After a picnic lunch, we'll start our exploration with the Mosaic Canyon Hike. We will hike 1 to 2 miles into Mosaic Canyon, so named because of the small rocks cemented into rock beds. There is fun scrambling in a few places but if that isn't appealing, sitting and soaking up the sun, surrounded by soaring canyon walls, is also delightful. We'll then go to our lodging, Furnace Creek Ranch, where we spend the next three nights. Overnight Furnace Creek Ranch. (B, L, D)

**DAY 3**

**Hike Golden Canyon-Gower Gulch loop; afternoon free time**

This morning we hike the Golden Canyon-Gower Gulch Loop. This 4.5-mile loop trail first takes us through colorful Golden Canyon and then up and over a ridge, passing beneath Manley Beacon. The trail then drops into Gower Gulch, another canyon but with a completely different feel and footing than Golden Canyon. The loop ends with a traverse along the base of the cliffs that rise abruptly from the flatter plain below. Lunch today will be along the trail, perhaps at the top of the hike under Manly Peak with its magnificent views of the golden mudstone hills of this gulch. On the way back to the Ranch we'll stop at one of the most famous places in Death Valley, Bad Water Basin - the lowest point in North America, with an elevation of 282 ft below sea level! Bad Water Basin is actually a salt pan that is covered each year by rainfall. The geology here is pretty amazing. Back at the ranch, the rest of the afternoon is free, perhaps some time lounging by the outdoor swimming pool, relaxing outside reading that good book you brought or visiting the Borax Museum on property is on your personal agenda â€“ all good choices!

**DAY 4**

**Hike Ubehebe Crater, Salt Creek Interpretative Trail, visit Badwater Salt Flat**

Death Valley is a huge park, a fact we will appreciate more fully after today. We'll begin a bit earlier to make sure we have time for everything! After driving an hour into the northern part of the Park, our first stop will be the 600-foot deep Ubehebe Crater, the remnants of a massive hydrovolcanic explosion 300 years ago. We will hike along the west rim of the Crater to Little Hebe and several other craters, before continuing around the rim for a total of 1.5 miles. After conquering the crater, we'll enjoy a picnic lunch and then visit Salt Creek Interpretative Trail. An easy boardwalk takes us to the Creek, a stream of salty water that is the only habitat of the endangered pupfish. And yes â€“ thereâ€™s still more! Since we're on this side of the park the next logical place to visit is the Mesquite Sand Dunes â€“ spectacular dunes that stretch as far as the eye can see â€“ an excellent time to play in the sand. After enjoying the dunes, we'll head into the nearby Stovepipe Wells settlement for dinner. If the skies are clear, perhaps one more stop on the way back to the Ranch at the Dunes for a bit of star gazing. A fun day! Overnight Furnace Creek Ranch. (B, L, D)
Today we have to head back to our real lives but we’ll do a bit of exploring along the way. On the way out of the park, we’ll stop at another famous spot, Zabriskie Point for a last look over the valley and a chance to get those last geology questions answered. On the way back to Las Vegas there are a couple of other stops possible depending on timing which would include a visit to the Armargosa Opera House in Armargosa and lunch at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge for a last chance to see pup fish. We will return to the Las Vegas Airport by 3:00 and you can either plan to fly out after 5:00 or stick around and try your luck. (B, L)