



ADVENTURES
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DEATH VALLEY AND JOSHUA TREE

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Learning all about the fascinating geology, flora and fauna of Death Valley & Joshua Tree NP
- Visiting both a low and high desert National Park
- Hiking across badlands, through canyons, around an old volcano and through ancient rock formations
- Stargazing in one of the darkest skies you'll ever see
- Visiting a ghost town, desert oasis, abandoned mines and enjoying the company of other like-minded travelers

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	Arrive Las Vegas (LAS) any time before 5 PM
Depart:	Depart on the last day from Palm Spring CA airport (PSP)

TRIP OVERVIEW

A Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Park hiking tour is the perfect antidote to the winter blahs and one of the best warm winter vacations in the United States! In March the skies are clear and sunny (but not too hot!) and the hiking is excellent. In addition to unique ecology and engaging human history, there is fascinating geology that our guides will help us understand. We'll visit Rhyolite Ghost Town with its deserted ruins; see deserted mines; a saltwater river in the desert; a desert oasis home to the famous pupfish, hike at the lowest point in the whole US; along the rim of a volcano and through surreal geologic formations. If you long to put away your down jacket and put on your shorts, feel warm sun on your deprived skin, and be totally immersed in a place that has a mystic status for many of us. By the end of the trip, you'll have higher Vitamin D levels and a whole new appreciation of this unique landscape. Maximum group size: 12

RATING

This trip is designed for any active woman who wants to explore Death Valley. This is an excellent trip for novice hikers: the hikes, while providing both variety and challenge, are moderate in length, and the guides will provide tips and instruction so that by the end you will be a confident hiker. A rating of 2 is suitable for any woman who regularly walks at a **brisk** pace 3 to 4 days a week for 35 - 45 minutes. **Rating:** 1 [\[2\]](#) 3 4 5.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 1 - 2 experienced AGC guides based on group size
- Seven nights of double occupancy accommodation
- All meals from dinner as outlined on the itinerary
- Transportation from Las Vegas to Death Valley, Death Valley to Joshua Tree and transportation to Palm Springs hotel
- National Park entry fees

Not included: travel to Las Vegas or from Palm Springs airports, travel to the hotel at the beginning of the trip, travel insurance, alcoholic beverages and guide gratuities

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned 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

March is typically excellent hiking, with temperatures in the high 70s. 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 (not a hotel shuttle), cab or Uber 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

Today we will make our way to Death Valley National Park, a drive that takes about 2.5 hours. Death Valley and Joshua Tree are all about water the overabundance and lack thereof! Our first stop will be Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the largest oasis in the Mojave Desert. A biodiversity hot spot and home to 30 endemic species include the famous pupfish. After our picnic lunch we will continue to Rhyolite Ghost town, a collection of the remnants of a boom-and-bust mining town. It will be hard to believe that the town had over 3,500 inhabitants at one time. After leaving Rhyolite we will stop at "Hells Gate" and you will get your first glimpse of Death Valley and its amazing geology. We will head to the Ranch at Death Valley, where we spend the next three nights. Overnight Ranch at Death Valley (B, L, D)

DAY 3

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. (Named after William Manly who lead a group of ill-fated prospectors out of Death Valley during the 1849 Gold Rush.) 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 (an alluvial fan) that rise abruptly from the flatter plain below. If you want some time on your own during this trip, the rest of the afternoon is free for you to do as you choose, perhaps enjoying the thermally heated pool or seeing the Visitor's Center. Alternatively, we will head to the Harmony Borax Works to learn about borax mining in Death Valley. Lots of good choices! We will meet again in the late afternoon for a trip to Badwater Basin, the lowest point in North America. Overnight Oasis at Death Valley Ranch. (B, L, D).

DAY 4

Death Valley is a huge park, a fact we will appreciate more fully after today. We'll begin our day 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 maar volcanic explosion 300 years ago. We will hike along the west rim of the Crater to Little Hebe, before continuing around the rim for a total of 1.5 miles. On the way back, we will have a desert picnic and stopping at the Salt Creek Interpretative Trail. An easy boardwalk takes us to the Creek, a stream of salty water that is the habitat for cold water pupfish, cousins of the Ash Meadows pupfish. Returning to the ranch before heading out to in the late afternoon for to the Mesquite sand dunes. The late afternoon setting sun adds to the beauty of the dunes. (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Today we load up for the drive to Joshua Tree National Park. It's a long drive (over 4 hours) but full of desert beauty and stop along the way to break it up. We will say goodbye to Death Valley from Zabriskie Point which overlooks the valley and one of our hiking trails. Continuing on to the Mojave National Preserve, we'll stop in Kelso at the Kelso Depot Visitor Center to learn about the once thriving railroad depot. We then continue to Joshua Tree National Park and stop by the Oasis of Mara visitor's center before heading into the park and our first hike in the park. (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Joshua Tree has a rich geological and human history. Designated as a national monument in 1936 and a national park in 1994, it straddles the California Mojave and Colorado deserts with their diverse ecosystems. Ranging from 3,000 to 5,185 feet above sea level, the park is both higher and generally cooler than Death Valley. It is also home to the bizarrely shaped Joshua Tree and is a playground for climbers and hikers alike. We will begin a full day in Joshua Tree National Park by hiking the Split Rock Trail and Skull Rock Trails. The Split Rock Trail is approximately 3.5 miles of diverse terrain, taking us through rock formations, sandy wash, and rolling desert landscapes. We will combine it with the Skull Rock trail to the aptly named rock formation, Skull Rock trail. For our lunch spot we'll head to the Hidden Valley area with a chance to explore the valley that was used to hide purloined cattle. After lunch we hike to Barkers Dam Loop or The Wall Street Mill hike to see remnants of the human history of Joshua Tree. (B, L, D)

DAY 7

Our visit to Joshua Tree has been quick but we do not want to leave without visiting the 49 Palms Oasis. The 3-mile trail ascends a 300-foot ridge before dropping back down to the desert oasis. Along the landscape is dotted with the barrel cacti and spring flowers (hopefully). We will stop for our picnic lunch at the oasis before returning on the same path. If energy and time permits, we will stop at the western section of the park for a hike in the Black Rock area. We sadly leave Joshua Tree National Park behind as we head to Palm Springs. We will spend our last night in Palm Springs CA. (B, L, D)

DAY 8

You are free to leave at any time today or stay and enjoy Palm Springs!

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

If you are flying: The airport in Las Vegas (LAS) is the closest airport to fly in for the Death Valley trip. All major airlines as well as many of the lower cost competitors fly into LAS. The hotel we are staying in (along with the majority of Las Vegas hotels) does not have a dedicated airport shuttle. There are continuous and inexpensive shuttle services available just outside the baggage claims area of the airport. Check out: <https://www.mccarran.com/Go/Shuttles.aspx> for a current list of airport shuttles. Please note that some shuttles service only those hotels located on the strip (which ours is not). Your trip cost includes transportation back to the Palm Springs airport on the last day of the trip. If you are driving, you should leave your car at the Las Vegas airport. You can catch a flight out of Palm Springs Airport to Las Vegas to pick up your vehicle.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

GETTING HOME

You are free to leave at any time on the day last of the trip. We will be staying at a hotel with a free airport shuttle to the Palm Springs Airport (PSP).

ACCOMMODATIONS

We'll start with one night at a hotel in Las Vegas and then spend three nights at [Furnace Creek Ranch](#). We will be staying in the deluxe rooms, which have French doors leading to small patios adjacent to the park/pool area, two queen beds, air conditioning, hair dryers, in-room coffee makers, TV, phone, full private bath and mini refrigerator.

When we visit Joshua Tree, we will stay at the historic [29 Palms Inn](#), located on a 9,000-year-old oasis surrounded by the Mojave Desert. We will stay in wood framed cabins each with a unique configuration. Most of the rooms here are single rooms. Some cabins have two individual bedrooms that share an in-house bathroom. All have the promise of beautiful desert views. On the last night of the trip we will stay in Palm Springs at a hotel with easy access to the airport.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

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