A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO

# DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

2005

## Preserving a Crown Jewel

Less than 100 years after the first pioneers stumbled into Death Valley, our perception of it had changed from a place of deadly desolation tempting only for its mineral wealth to a land rich with scenic grandeur worthy of our nation's protection.

In 1933, Death Valley was proclaimed a national monument and joined the cadre of cherished landscapes of the National Park System. Although isolated and relatively undeveloped, the new monument quickly gained popularity with Americans intrigued with the myth of the Old West. The California Centennial celebrations in 1949 brought the budding monument's first big crowds and introduced the public not only to the area's romantic history but exposed them to the valley's natural wonders and beauty. Death Valley became a favorite destination for visitors, but the recognition and added protection of national park status still eluded the monument.

In the intervening years, Death Valley faced challenges that threatened the features the monument was set aside to protect. Strip mines were gouged into the colorful badlands and canyons, feral burros and exotic vegetation overran native species, and growing populations in southwestern cities put increased demands on open space and wilderness. Time had come for additional protection for Death Valley

After almost a decade of struggle in Congress, the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) was signed into law on October 31, 1994. The CDPA established Death Valley National Park and added more than a million acres to the old monument lands. It also created Joshua Tree National Park, Mojave National Preserve and protected wilderness areas both within and around the new desert parks. In addition, the CDPA started the process to provide a permanent home for Death Valley's native people. That dream became a reality in 2000 with the passage of the Timbisha Shoshone Homeland Act.

Death Valley has seen a lot of change since it became a national monument in 1933, but most visitors may not notice that many. National parks are our nation's crown jewels. They are set aside to provide for the enjoyment of the people, while preserving the resources, unimpaired for future generations.

*Joshua tree flower bud*

## What's Inside?




**DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK**
(760) 786-3200
www.nps.gov/deva

# Park Information

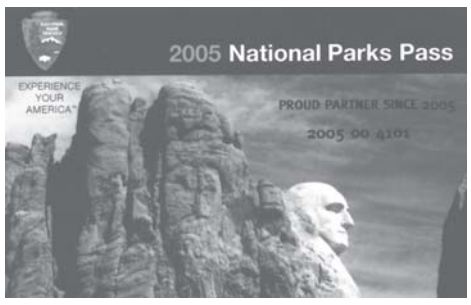
## Regulations Protect Your Park

**Death Valley National Park** and its resources belong to everyone, we all must share the responsibility of protecting this land. Please remember and obey the following regulations during your stay:

- **Collecting or disturbing** any animal, plant, rock or any other natural, historical or archeological feature is prohibited.
- **All vehicles must remain on established roads.** This includes motorcycles, bicycles, and four-wheel drive vehicles. All motorized vehicles and their drivers must be properly licensed. Vehicles with off-road registration "green stickers" may not be operated in the park.
- **Do not feed or disturb wildlife,** including coyotes, roadrunners & ravens. When wild animals are fed by humans they tend to depend upon this "unnatural food source" rather than forage for their natural diet.
- **Hunting and use of firearms** in the park is illegal. Firearms may be transported through the park only if they are unloaded and cased.
- **Keep pets confined or leashed.** Pets are allowed only in developed areas and along paved or dirt roads.
- **Camping is limited to developed campgrounds** and some backcountry areas. For details on backcountry camping and to obtain a free permit, stop at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center or any ranger station.
- **Campfires are allowed** in firepits provided in developed campgrounds. They are prohibited elsewhere in the park. Gathering wood is unlawful.
- **Please do not litter.**

## National Park Pass

A new annual pass for the National Parks was introduced in 2000. The **National Park Pass** allows admission to any National Park unit that charges an entrance fee. The cost of the pass is $50. For persons who visit several National Park areas within twelve months the pass is a good bargain. But more importantly, you will become a partner with thousands of others who support the National Parks because 80% of the cost of the National Park Pass goes directly into supporting park programs such as: repairing outdated and overused campgrounds, restoring historic structures in parks or conducting crucial research to track and protect endangered species such as the Devil's Hole pupfish. You can purchase the National Park Pass at any national park where fees are collected or by visiting the website at **www.nationalparks.org**




## Campground Information

| Campground | Season | Elevation | Fee | Sites | Water | Tables | Firepits | Toilets | Dump Station |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Furnace Creek** | all year | -196´ | $16** | 136 | yes | yes | yes | flush | yes |
| **Sunset** | Oct-Apr | -196´ | $10 | 1000 | yes | no | no | flush | yes |
| **Texas Spring** | Oct-Apr | sea level | $12 | 92 | yes | yes | yes | flush | yes |
| **Stovepipe Wells** | Oct-Apr | sea level | $10 | 190 | yes | some | some | flush | yes |
| **Mesquite Spring** | all year | 1800´ | $10 | 30 | yes | yes | yes | flush | yes |
| **Emigrant** (tent only) | all year | 2100´ | free | 10 | yes | yes | no | flush | no |
| **Wildrose** | all year | 4100´ | free | 23 | yes | yes | yes | pit | no |
| **Thorndike*** | Mar-Nov | 7400´ | free | 6 | no | yes | yes | pit | no |
| **Mahogany Flat*** | Mar-Nov | 8200´ | free | 10 | no | yes | yes | pit | no |

*accessible to high-clearance vehicles only. 4-wheel drive may be necessary.
**Furnace Creek Campground fee changes to $10 per night from mid-April to mid-October

**RV Hookups** are available only at the concession-run Stovepipe Wells RV Park and the privately-owned Panamint Springs Resort.

**Texas Springs Campground** (Upper Loop) Limits on RV site use may apply in springtime to accomodate increased demand for tent camping space.

## Camping Reservations

**Reservations may be made** for the Furnace Creek Campground and group sites for October 15 thorough April 15. Beginning on the fifth of each month, reservations can be made five months in advance.

For reservations at Furnace Creek Campground and group sites call:

**1-800-365-2267** or visit the website at: **reservations.nps.gov**

## Campground Rules: (complete list posted at each campground)

- **Group size of no larger than 8 people and 2 vehicles is allowed per campsite.** Only one RV allowed per site. Larger groups wanting to camp together can reserve the group sites at Furnace Creek Campground.
- **Generator hours are from 7 AM to 7 PM, unless otherwise posted.** These hours are chosen to accommodate the needs of the wide variety of people who use Death Valley's campgrounds. Generators are not allowed at Texas Springs Campground.
- **Pets must be kept on a leash (no longer than 6 feet) at all times.** Keeping your pet leashed protects other campers and wildlife as well as your pet. Pet owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets.

*from top: desert trail; Rhyolite ghost town; Jayhawker inscriptions; kit fox; Panamint City ruins; Panamint daisy.*

# Desert Survival

## Staying Safe & Sound

- **Water:** Drink at least one gallon (4 liters) of water per day to replace loss from perspiration. Carry plenty of extra drinking water in your car and while hiking.
- **Heat & Dehydration:** If you feel dizzy, nauseous or a headache, get out of the sun immediately and drink plenty of water. Dampen clothing to lower your body temperature. Heat and dehydration can kill.
- **Hiking:** Do not hike in the low elevations when temperatures are hot. The mountains are cooler in summer, but can have snow and ice in winter.
- **Summer Driving:** Stay on paved roads in summer. If your car breaks down, stay with it until help comes. Be prepared; carry plenty of extra water.
- **Flash Floods:** Avoid canyons during rain storms and be prepared to move to higher ground. While driving, be alert for water running in washes and across road dips.
- **Mine Hazards:** Do not enter mine tunnels or shafts. Mines may be unstable, have hidden shafts, pockets of bad air and poisonous gas.
- **Dangerous Animals:** Never place your hands or feet where you cannot see first. Rattlesnakes, scorpions or black widow spiders may be sheltered there.
- **In Case of Emergency:** Dial 911 from any telephone or cell phone. Cell phones may not work in many parts of the park, do not depend on them.

## Survive the Drive

- **The main cause of death** in Death Valley is single-car accidents.
- **Follow the speed limit** to help negotiate the narrow roads, sharp curves and unexpected dips.
- **Avoid speeding out of control** on steep downhill grades by shifting to a lower gear and gently pressing on the brakes.
- **Don't block traffic.** Pull off the pavement if you want to stop to enjoy the scenery.
- **Wear a seatbelt** and make sure it is adjusted to fit snugly.
- **Unpaved roads are subject to washouts.** Check for conditions before traveling these routes.

## Desert Wildlife: Masters of Survival

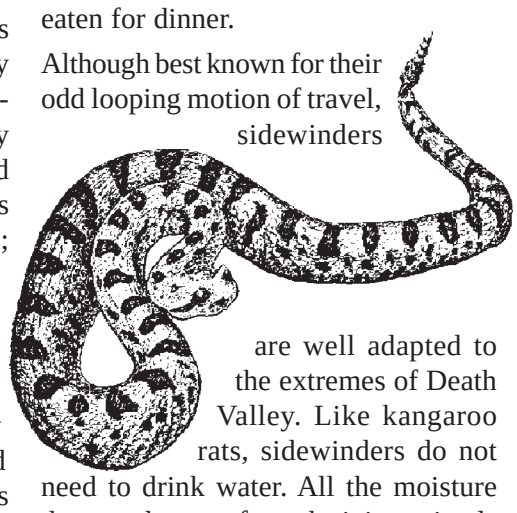
The extremes of summer in Death Valley pose the ultimate test of survival for wildlife. Animals must have special adaptations of bodies and habits to survive the severe climate.

**Kangaroo rats** can live their entire lives without drinking a drop of liquid, a very handy ability when living in a place famous for its aridity. All of the water they need to survive can be metabolized within their bodies from the dry seeds they eat. They also conserve moisture; their kidneys can concentrate urine to five times that of humans.

Kangaroo rats avoid the intense heat of the day in underground burrows that are both cooler and higher in humidity than outside. Water vapor in the humid air is reclaimed by special membranes in their nasal passages, and is also absorbed by the food stored within the den. They may even plug the burrow's entrance with dirt to keep out heat and intruders.

**Sidewinders** are the type of unwelcome guests the kangaroo rat is trying to keep out. These small rattlesnakes also spends the hot days in underground dens. Rather than digging their own burrows, they simply move into one previously occupied by the unlucky rodent eaten for dinner.

Although best known for their odd looping motion of travel, sidewinders are well adapted to the extremes of Death Valley. Like kangaroo rats, sidewinders do not need to drink water. All the moisture they need comes from the juicy animals they eat.



Endothermic (warm-blooded) animals such as kangaroo rats and humans use food as fuel to produce body heat internally, but ectothermic (cold-blooded) reptiles like sidewinders must absorb heat from their environment. Deserts have a lot of heat, but little food, so reptiles are excellent desert dwellers.

The tiny **pupfish** of Salt Creek are also ectothermic, yet they cannot escape the high temperatures of solar-heated pools. Pupfish are among the most heat tolerant of all fishes. Some species even live in warm springs. They have been known to survive in water temperatures of 112° F.

Another obstacle these fish face is high salinity. Pupfish can survive in water three times saltier than sea water. Excess salts are excreted through their kidneys and gills.

During your visit, keep in mind that only the ability to carry water and to create artificial shelter allows you to be here in relative comfort. You are not as physically adapted to survive in Death Valley's heat as its wildlife residents.

Emergency?
**Dial 911**

*roadrunner with prey*

## Death in the Dunes

When Sarah and Jason woke up that late summer morning, it looked like it would be just another nice day on their honeymoon. They were in their late 20s, physically fit, and ready for a Death Valley adventure. They had no idea of the disaster they were headed for.

Like so many who come to the desert, they were drawn to the sand dunes. They started on their hike that morning, enjoying the glory of the classic desert scenery. After a while, Sarah became tired; hiking on loose sand can become difficult and she was getting too hot. She gave Jason the rest of her water and returned to the Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station to wait in the shade while he continued to the far side of the dunes.

She had already been waiting more than an hour when the park ranger invited her inside where it was cooler. She told the ranger she was expecting her husband soon and that he was "out there," motioning with her hand towards the dunes. By that time, temperatures were reaching 110ºF (44ºC) in the shade. The ranger became concerned. He sent out calls for assistance and within minutes other rangers headed towards Stovepipe Wells. Using binoculars to scan the dune field from the flank of a nearby mountain and the flying overhead in the park's airplane, rangers spotted Jason was from above. Several of the most fit park employees were dispatched to his location. When they reached him, he was unconscious and had labored breathing. He later died in a Las Vegas hospital. Heat and dehydration had proven to be stronger than he was.

Death Valley National Park receives nearly one million visitors a year. Even when it is hot, people are able to travel through the valley in the comfort of air conditioned cars. Due to that ease of travel, visitors often underestimate the dangers of being in one of the hottest places on Earth.

Could this death have been prevented? This incident tells us that even fit and healthy people must use caution. With better planning, better timing, and enough water this story could have ended differently. (See "Staying Safe & Sound" above for more details.) We must all learn to respect the desert to enjoy it safely.

# Water & Humans

## Springs of Furnace Creek

Death Valley is infamous as a place of heat, salt, and bad water, but it is the freshwater springs that allows for much of the life here. To this day water controls where life is found and provides the life's blood of all creatures who live here.

As the glaciers retreated from the Sierra Nevada Mountains at the end of the last ice age, Death Valley became a lake-filled basin with abundant water and life. Life teamed in the fresh water lakes and crowded the verdant shores. 10,000 years ago the ancestors of the modern Shoshone and Paiute made their homes along the lake and in the nearby mountains. Life was good, and water brought them life.

Over time, the climate became more arid and the lakes dried up. Even the memory of them faded. The Shoshone people crowded around the only remaining sources of life, the freshwater springs that bubbled out of the ground along the foot of the Funeral Mountains. Each major spring had a major village and the largest village of all , Timbisha, was at what we today call Furnace Creek.

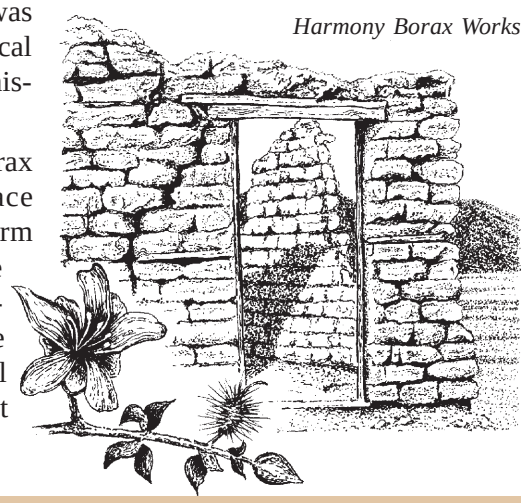
In 1849 a party of pioneers taking a shortcut to the goldfields of California stumbled into the valley. The pioneers were desperate for water, and they too found salvation in the springs at Furnace Creek. In the 1870's the first white settlers, Andrew Laswell and Cal Mowrey entered the valley. They were looking for water to grow crops and alfalfa for the booming mining towns in the Panamint Mountains to the west. Laswell and Mowrey developed hay ranches at both Bennett's Well and Furnace Creek and were the first to dig irrigation ditches to harness the power of the water in the Furnace Creek area.

By the early 1880's, Laswell and Mowrey were gone and the water at Furnace Creek was controlled by William Tell Coleman and Company. Coleman developed the Harmony Borax Works just north of Furnace Creek and his chemical processing company needed water to extract borax from the salt crusts that lined the ancient lake beds. Texas Spring provided the water for chemical processing, and the irrigation ditches and water from Travertine Springs above Furnace Creek provided water for Coleman's company town of "Greenland". With water, Coleman was able to make a success of his chemical operation and make Death Valley history with his twenty mule teams.

Through the 1920's and 30's, the borax companies that controlled Furnace Creek began to diversify. The warm springs at Furnace Creek became the life's blood of a new industry. Tourism! United States Borax was able to convince officials in the National Park Service administration that Death Valley was a unique national treasure and should be preserved as a store of natural and cultural history. In 1933 Death Valley was designated a National Monument. Furnace Creek with it's abundant water, shading trees, and resort accommodations became the heart of activity in the new park.

Today the water from Travertine and Texas Springs is the lifeblood of the Furnace Creek Resort area and all of the activities at the campgrounds and visitor center. More than 1,200,000 visitors pass through the area every year, and we use 95% of the more than 1,000,000 gallons of fresh water that the springs produce every day. Furnace Creek is an oasis in a salt brine desert, a spot of greenery and life on a burning salt pan, and an anomaly in an otherwise extremely harsh environment. Water has always shaped and controlled the life that is here.

*Harmony Borax Works*



## The Value of Water at Scotty's Castle

Death Valley Scotty told a typically exagerated story of coming upon a man apparently lost in Death Valley and without water. The man croaked to Scotty desperately, "Water, water." Scotty pondered the situation and decided the most humane thing for him to do was shoot the man and put him out of his misery. Next to gold, Scotty knew the most valuable thing in the desert was water.

Scotty claimed to work as a swamper in Death Valley, taking the borax out of Death Valley over 160 miles to a train depot in Mojave. It was through this experience that Death Valley Scotty came to love the grand, endless beauty that is Death Valley. He also knew that the one thing you have to have to survive in the desert is water. Scotty made it a point to know where water could be found in Death Valley.

Scotty's favorite watering hole was the springs of Grapevine Canyon in the northern end of Death Valley. By 1907 Scotty began "squatting" on the land near the present Lower Vine Ranch. He even filed a homestead claim, but he didn't gain legal possession.

These particular springs have been used for centuries, most notably by the Shoshone Indians, who used the area for subsistence farming and as a wintering ground. The springs provided for a distinct environment for plants such as mesquite and wild grapes. Willow trees that grow near the springs provided for the baskets the Shoshone wove.

Over time Euro-Americans began to explore Death Valley, and with their explorations came the discovery of valuable minerals. In Grapevine Canyon Jacob Steininger was the first to gain legal claim of the land and the associated springs by filing a desert land entry claim in 1902.

It was from Steininger that Albert M. Johnson, Scotty's benefactor, bought the land the Death Valley Ranch now stands. Johnson began buying land in 1916 after visiting with Scotty and experiencing the magnificent setting of Grapevine Canyon. The canyon was an ideal location for constructing a vacation home, because it had a constant and regular source of water. By 1937 Johnson had acquired full title to over 1500 acres in Grapevine Canyon.

Albert Johnson was formally educated at Cornell University receiving a degree in engineering. He used his ingenuity and persistence to take advantage of the natural resources available in the canyon, and overcome the challenges inherent in building in such a remote location.

Construction of Death Valley Ranch (later known as Scotty's Castle) began in 1922. Much of the technology incorporated into the building included special uses of the nearby springs. Perhaps the most significant use of the springs was using Pelton water wheels to generate electricity. The springs are located at an elevation 300 feet above the building setting, which insures ample water pressure as it comes down hill and passes through the Pelton water wheel. The turning wheel would run a generator to produce electricity. There is enough water to sustain all electrical and driving power requirements and still have enough left over for other uses.

To counteract the dessicating effects of the dry desert climate, an unusual water fountain was built within the Castle. In the Great Hall, water slowly dripped down the face of a rock wall into a catch basin to be recirculated. It provided added humidity to the interior environment and the comforting sound of water

A visit to Scotty's Castle can reveal an idyllic setting filled with technological ingenuity. Albert Johnson and his best friend Death Valley Scotty found the setting in Grapevine Canyon to have that rare quality of a sense of peace with the benefit of valuable water.

*Darwin Falls*

# Oasis Life

## Evolution Islands

Wetland and riparian areas have a unique scientific value. The Death Valley/Ash Meadows area is a classic example of a plant and animal laboratory in evolution. This fact is due to the relatively recent development of the current desert climate and a unique geologic history where large marshes and lakes were relatively plentiful as recently as 15,000 years ago. This combination of events has had the unusual result of confining several aquatic species that were probably widespread at the start of the last Ice Age to remnant wetlands that have persisted for thousands of years.

The presence of the unique suite of pupfish in the Death Valley region is comparable to the presence of land tortoises and Darwin's finches on the Galapagos Islands. Both animal groups originally colonized their respective areas thousands of years ago and became isolated in separate habitats that possess different environmental conditions. Through time, natural selection and isolation transformed a limited number of ancestral lines into several unique varieties. The existence of nine pupfish species and subspecies in isolated wetlands along the Amargosa River is therefore akin to the 13 finch species and 15 tortoise subspecies on the isolated islands of the Galapagos archipelago. In each case, differences in species were aided by the separation of populations that could not cross inhospitable habitats.

Extremes on the Galapagos Islands have helped to shape the physical characteristics and tolerances of the tortoises on different islands and the same general process of natural selection has affected pupfish which inhabit wetlands along the Amargosa River. The fish have, for example, developed/retained an ability to live in water that is 2.5 times more saline than seawater. With regard to temperature, some pupfish are able to live for short periods in water temperatures equal to 107° Fahrenheit. Both of these adaptations are important in a desert environment where water saltiness and temperatures are significantly greater than other areas in the United States.

Each type of pupfish has evolved to the extent that they are physically distinct and genetically different. Differences in breeding behavior have been documented for pupfish in habitats that are relatively close to one other but possess different environmental conditions. In a similar vein, genetic variation has also been found in different populations of speckled dace along the Amargosa River. This fact suggests that "each desert wetland community functions as an evolutionarily significant unit" (Sada et. al 1995).

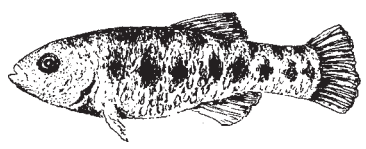
Much of the genetic and physical variability in the pupfish has been attributed to different environmental conditions that exist in different wetlands (e.g. warm spring orifices vs. cool spring outflows, high salinity vs. low salinity areas) and differences in population size which are influenced by habitat size (small springs vs. large springs). This relationship suggests that pupfish evolution is highly dependent on the maintenance of natural habitats, and that human modifications to environments will alter the course of natural selection.

Regional loss and degradation of wetland and riparian resources increases the value of pristine habitats inside Death Valley National Park. California has lost a greater percentage of its wetland acreage than any other state with 91% of the original habitats being drained, filled, or manipulated. Nevada has lost 52% of its original wetlands, and only 0.3% of the state acreage is now classified as a wetland. Loss of riparian habitats in California, Arizona and New Mexico has been so extensive that they have been considered to be endangered ecosystems.

In short, the unique plants and animals that exist within the biological laboratory of Death Valley National Park offer significant scientific opportunities. At some future time, these species may hold the key to understanding how fast evolution takes place, as well as how plants and animals adapt physically and behaviorally to their immediate surroundings.

## Save The Pupfish!

Some visitors may remember seeing bumper stickers on cars in the 1970s that lent support to the survival of the endangered Devils Hole pupfish (Cyprinodon diabolis). Devils Hole is a limestone cave filled year-round with warm water that flows up from an underground aquifer. It is an isolated unit of Death Valley National Park adjacent to the Ash Meadows National Wildlife area (an oasis of spring-fed pools which support plants and animals found nowhere else in the world) located to the east of the park. The Devils Hole pupfish, along with several other pupfish species that were stranded in the southwest deserts after the last ice age, have adapted over the past 15,000 years to extreme climatic changes as the waters that once covered vast portions of this area have receded. The species has developed unique physiological mechanisms in order to survive. Pumping of water from nearby wells in the 1960s lowered the water level within Devils Hole and nearby springs, threatening the pupfish. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1976 helped protect the pupfish from extinction by ruling that water levels within the Devils Hole must be kept high enough to allow for critical spawning and feeding habitat to remain covered by water. As a result of the ruling, irrigated agricultural development in the area was curtailed and in 1984 the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge was created.



Fast forward to 2005 and the Devils Hole pupfish are still struggling for survival. Although pumping from wells in the Ash Meadows area was ended and water levels recovered somewhat, the water level never did reach its pre-pumping height. The overall water level has slowly declined since 1989 until once again the prognosis for the continued survival of the pupfish species within the Devils Hole is in question. At the current annual rate of decline for the water level within Devils Hole, it may be predicted that by the year 2020 the level may fall below the court mandated minimum water level.

Resource managers have closely monitored the conditions at Devils Hole and a recovery plan for the endangered pupfish has been in place for several years. Aseries of Devils Hole workshops have brought together many of the subject experts in order to solicit the necessary ideas and actions to protect the pupfish and understand the dynamics of this unique ecosystem. Water level, water temperature, oxygen levels, food and energy sources, and climate change are some of the factors that may be influencing the overall low numbers of pupfish. Continued regional development and the pumping of ground water to support the development within the entirety of the Death Valley watershed will likely continue to have both immediate and long-term impacts on the resources within the park boundaries. A 2.5-centimeter fish may well be our "canary in a coal mine" for many of the plants and animals that have adapted to the environment of Death Valley.

*ftom top: blue-eyed grass; dragonfly; yerba mansa*

# Day Hikes

## Things to Know Before You Go

**Before starting a hike**, learn the current conditions, water availability, and weather forecasts. Backpackers should obtain a free permit.

**Always carry water.** Two liters for a short winter dayhike; 4 liters or more in the summer or for long hikes.

**Constructed trails are rare** in this park. Trails are provided in places that are heavily used and sensitive to damage. If a trail is there, please use it. Most hiking routes in the park are cross-country, up canyons, or along ridges. Footing can be rough & rocky.

**Hiking in low elevations** can be dangerous when it is hot. The high peaks can be covered with snow in winter and spring. The best time to hike in the park is October to April.

**Dogs and bicycles** are not allowed on trails or in the wilderness.

## Trails & Routes

### Golden Canyon Trail

**Length**: 1 mile, one-way.

**Difficulty:** easy

**Start**: Golden Canyon parking area, 2 miles south of Hwy 190 on Badwater Rd.

**Description**: Easy trail through colorful canyon. Red Cathedral located ¼ mile up canyon from last numbered marker. Interpretive trail guides are available.

### Gower Gulch Loop

**Length**: 4 miles round-trip.

**Difficulty:** moderate

**Start**: Golden Canyon parking area, 2 miles south of Hwy 190 on Badwater Rd.

**Description**: Colorful badlands, canyon narrows, old borax mines. Hike up Golden Canyon to marker #10, then follow trail over badlands and down Gower Gulch to finish loop. Two easy dryfalls must be scrambled down. Ask for Gower Gulch handout at Visitor Center.

### Natural Bridge Canyon

**Length**: ½ mile to natural bridge, 1 mile to end of canyon.

**Difficulty:** easy

**Start**: Natural Bridge parking area, 1.5 miles off Badwater Road on gravel road, 13.2 miles south of Hwy 190.

**Description**: Uphill walk through narrow canyon. Large natural bridge at ½ mile. Trail ends at dry waterfall.

### Salt Creek Trail

**Length**: ½ mile round-trip.

**Difficulty:** easy

**Start**: Salt Creek parking area, 1 mile off Hwy 190 on graded gravel road, 13.5 miles north of Furnace Ck.

**Description**: Boardwalk along small stream. Good for viewing rare pupfish and other wildlife. Best in late winter/early spring.

### Sand Dunes

**Length**: 2 miles to highest dune.

**Difficulty:** easy to moderate

**Start**: 2.2 miles east of Stovepipe Wells on Hwy 190.

**Description**: Graceful desert dunes, numerous animal tracks. Walk cross-country to 100 ft. high dunes. Best in morning or afternoon for dramatic light. Also good for full moon hikes. *No trail.*

### Mosaic Canyon

**Length**: ½ to 2 miles, one-way.

**Difficulty:** moderate

**Start**: Mosaic Canyon parking area, 2 miles from Stovepipe Wells Village on graded gravel road.

**Description**: Popular walk up a narrow, polished marble-walled canyon. First ½ mile is narrowest section. Some slickrock scrambling necessary. "Mosaics" of fragments of rocks cemented together can be seen in canyon walls. Bighorn sheep sighted occasionally.

### Titus Canyon Narrows

**Length**: 1.5 miles, one-way.

**Difficulty:** easy

**Start**: Titus Canyon Mouth parking area, 3 miles off Scotty's Castle Road on graded gravel road.

**Description**: Easy access to lower Titus Canyon. Follow gravel road up wash 1.5 miles through narrows or continue to Klare Springs and petroglyphs at 6.5 miles.

### Keane Wonder Mine Trail

**Length**: 1 mile, one-way.

**Difficulty:** strenuous

**Start**: Keane Wonder Mill parking area, 3 miles off Beatty Cutoff Road on graded gravel road.

**Description**: Steep, narrow trail from mill ruins to mine 1500' above. Sweeping views of Death Valley. Do not enter any mines - they are unstable and hazardous. An alternative hike in the same area is to Keane Wonder Spring at the base of the mountians 1 mile north of the mill trailhead.

### Little Hebe Crater Trail

**Length**: ½ mile, one-way.

**Difficulty:** moderate

**Start**: Ubehebe Crater parking area, 8 miles west of Scotty's Castle.

**Description**: Volcanic craters and elaborate erosion. Hike along west rim of Ubehebe Crater to Little Hebe and several other craters. Continue around Ubehebe's rim for 1.5 mile loop hike.

### Death Valley Buttes

**Length**: 1.2 mile to top of first butte

**Difficulty:** strenuous

**Start**: Hell's Gate parking area on Daylight Pass Road.

**Description**: Climb prominent buttes at foot of the Grapevine Mountains. From Hell's Gate, walk SW ½ mile to buttes. Scramble up ridge to summit of first butte. The second butte is more difficult and 0.7 mile further. Descend 300' to saddle, then climb 500' to next summit. The ridges are narrow and exposed with steep drop-offs. *No trail.*

### Fall Canyon

**Length**: 3 miles, one-way.

**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Start**: Titus Canyon Mouth parking area, 3 miles off Scotty's Castle Road on graded gravel road.

**Description**: Spectacular wilderness canyon near Titus Canyon. Follow informal path ½ mile north along base of mountains, drop into large wash at canyon's mouth, then hike 2½ miles up canyon to 35' dryfall. You can climb around the dryfall 300' back down canyon on south side for access to best narrows. Canyon continues another 3 miles before second dryfall blocks passage. *No trail.*

## Summer Hikes

### Dante's Ridge

**Length**: ½ miles to first summit, 4 miles one-way to Mt. Perry

**Difficulty:** moderate

**Start**: Dantes View parking area

**Description**: Follow ridge north of Dantes View for spectacular vistas and a cool place to escape summer heat. *No trail for last 3.5 miles*

### Wildrose Peak Trail

**Length**: 4.2 miles, one-way.

**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Start**: Charcoal Kilns parking area on upper Wildrose Canyon Road.

**Description**: A good high peak to climb (9,064 ft.). Trail begins at north end of kilns with an elevation gain of 2,200 ft. Spectacular views beyond 2 mile point. Steep grade for last mile.

### Telescope Peak Trail

**Length**: 7 miles, one-way.

**Difficulty:** strenuous

**Start**: Mahogany Flat Campground at end of upper Wildrose Canyon Road. Rough, steep road after the Charcoal Kilns.

**Description**: Trail to highest peak in the park (11,049 ft.) with a 3,000 ft. elevation gain. Climbing this peak in the winter requires ice axe and crampons, and only advised for experienced winter climbers. Trail is usually snow-free by June.

*Salt flats at Badwater Basin*

# Points of Interest

Death Valley National Park has 3.3 million acres of desert and mountains, making it the largest national park in the contiguous United States. The possibilities for discovery are endless!

These are just a few of the most popular points of interest in the park. Most are easily accessible, but some require hiking or a vehicle with high ground clearance.

Before venturing out into the park, stop at the visitor center or a ranger stations to obtain your park permit, get a map and to inquire about current road conditions. Enjoy your park.

## Furnace Creek Area

**Golden Canyon:** Hikers entering the narrows of this canyon are greeted by golden badlands within. An interpretive pamphlet is available. Two-mile round-trip walk.

**Artist's Drive:** Scenic loop drive through multi-hued volcanic and sedimentary hills. Artist's Palette is especially photogenic in late afternoon light. The 9-mile paved road is one-way and is only drivable with vehicles less than 25 feet in length.

**Devil's Golf Course:** Immense area of rock salt eroded by wind and rain into jagged spires. So incredibly serrated that "only the devil could play golf on such rough links." The unpaved road leading to it is often closed after rain.

**Natural Bridge:** Massive rock span across interesting desert canyon. The spur road is gravel and often rough. From the trailhead, the natural bridge is a ½ mile walk.

**Badwater:** Lowest point in the Western Hemisphere, Badwater Basin is a surreal landscape of vast salt flats. A temporary lake may form here after heavy rainstorms. Do not walk on the salt flats in hot weather.

**Zabriskie Point:** Surrounded by a maze of wildly eroded and vibrantly colored badlands, this spectacular view is one of the park's most famous. Zabriskie Point is a popular sunrise and sunset viewing location. The viewpoint is a short walk uphill from the parking area.

**Dante's View:** The most breathtaking viewpoint in the park, this mountain-top overlook is more than 5000 feet above the inferno of Death Valley. The paved access road is open to all vehicles less than 25 feet in length.

## Stovepipe Wells Area

**Sand Dunes:** Tawny dunes smoothly rising nearly 100 feet from Mesquite Flat. Late afternoon light accentuates the ripples and patterns while morning is a good time to view tracks of nocturnal wildlife. Moonlight on the dunes can be magical, yet night explorers should be alert for sidewinder rattlesnakes during the warm season.

**Mosaic Canyon:** Polished marble walls and odd mosaic patterns of breccia make this small canyon a favorite. The twisting lower canyon is so narrow hikers must walk through it single-file. Some rock scrambling is required. The canyon opens up after ½ mile to reveal the heights of Tucki Mountain, but hikers can continue another 1½ miles.

*Titus Canyon Narrows*

**Salt Creek:** This stream of salty water is the only home to a rare pupfish, *Cyprinodon salinus*. Springtime is best for viewing pupfish; in summer the lower stream dries up and in winter the fish are dormant. The wooden boardwalk loops ½ mile through stands of pickleweed and past pools reflecting badland hills. Wheelchair accessible.

**Titus Canyon:** One of the largest and most scenically diverse canyons in the park. Within its lofty walls visitors can find multi-colored volcanic deposits, a ghost town, Indian petroglyphs, bighorn sheep, and deep, winding narrows. Titus Canyon is accessible to high-clearance vehicles via a 26-mile, one-way dirt road beginning outside the park. Those with standard vehicles may reach the canyon's mouth from the west via a two-way section of road.

## Panamint Springs Area

**Father Crowley Vista:** A landscape of dark lava flows and volcanic cinders abruptly gives way to the gash of Rainbow Canyon below this viewpoint. Walk the dirt track east of the parking lot for a grand overlook of northern Panamint Valley.

**Wildrose Charcoal Kilns:** These ten beehive-shaped structures are among the best preserved in the west. Built in 1876 to provide fuel to process silver/lead ore, they still smell of smoke today. The last 2 miles of gravel road to the kilns are passable to most vehicles.

**Lee Flat Joshua Trees:** The finest stands of tree-sized yuccas in the park grow in this mountain-rimmed valley. Take the paved but rough Saline Valley Road to a junction in Lee Flat. The gravel roads in either direction will provide good views of Joshua trees.

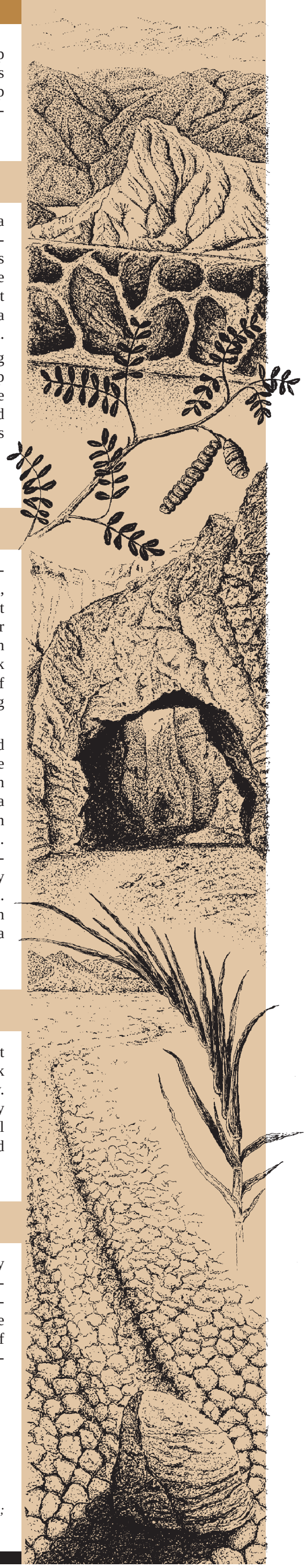
## Scotty's Castle Area

**Scotty's Castle:** Prospector "Death Valley Scotty" claimed this elaborate Spanish-style mansion was built by gold from his fictitious mine. In reality, it was the 1920s vacation home of his wealthy friends. Today, living history tours of the castle's richly furnished interior are given by costumed park rangers.

**Ubehebe Crater:** More than 3000 years ago the desert silence was shattered by a massive volcanic explosion caused by the violent release of underground steam pressure. When the cinders and dust settled, this 600 feet deep crater remained. Although easily visible from the paved road, hikers may want to circle the crater rim to see smaller craters.

**Eureka Dunes:** Rising majestically nearly 700 feet, these are the highest dunes in California. Isolated from other dunes, they are an evolutionary island, home to rare and endangered species of plants and animals. To give them extra protection, the dunes are off limits to sandboarding and horseback riding.

**The Racetrack:** Rocks mysteriously slide across the dry lakebed of the Racetrack, leaving behind long tracks for visitors to ponder. A high-clearance vehicle is needed to traverse the 27 miles of rough dirt road, but ask at a ranger station for current road conditions.



*from top: Zabriskie Point; screwbean mesquite; Natural Bridge; saltgrass; The Racetrack*

# Scotty's Castle

## Tours of Scotty's Castle

- Scotty's Castle is open for tours daily from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
- Castle grounds and picnic areas are open and free to the public from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
- Tickets are sold first come, first served. Large groups are recommended to make reservations.
- **Living History Tours**: 50 minute tour of the interior of the main house and annex by costumed guides conducted as if the year is 1939. These tours are given at least once an hour. ADA accessible.
- **Underground Mysteries Tour**: 50 minute tour of the castle's basement, tunnels and Pelton waterwheel. Presented 4 times daily. This tour is not ADA accessible.

**Tour fees:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Adults | $11.00 |
| Age 62 or over | $9.00 |
| Adults with a disability | $6.00 |
| Children (6-15 years) | $6.00 |
| Children under 5 | free |

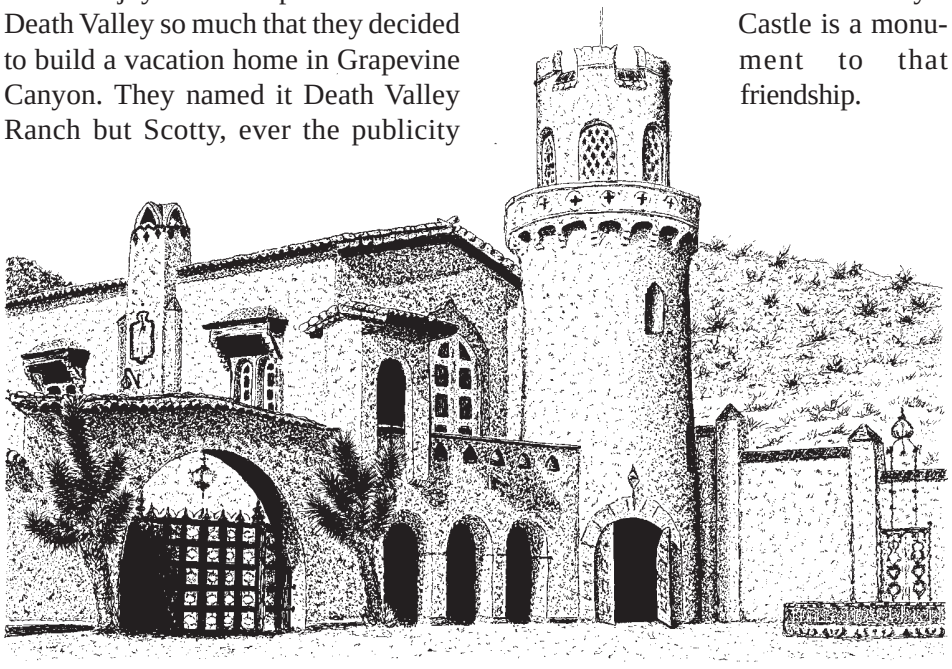
## A Monument To Friendship

Driving through Grapevine Canyon in the northern half of Death Valley National Park you happen upon a Spanish-style castle that is definitely out of place in this desolate landscape. You rub your eyes wondering if you have just seen a desert mirage. Well, your eyes aren't tricking you; this opulent enclave is Death Valley Ranch, though most people know it as Scotty's Castle. Though it may look like just a mansion, there is evidence of an amazing friendship scattered throughout the ranch complex.

Death Valley Scotty was born Walter Scott in Cynthiana, Kentucky in 1872. When he was 11 years old, he left home and headed to Nevada where he found work as a horse wrangler with his older brothers. He lived the life of a cowboy until he was 17 years old when he was recruited for the Buffalo Bill traveling Wild West show. He performed as a roughrider and sharp shooter with the show for 12 seasons, but when he showed up late to the opening day parade in New York City, Buffalo Bill was not pleased. The resulting disagreement led Scotty to quit the show. Scotty then turned to mining speculation as a new source of income. He claimed he had a gold mine in Death Valley and convinced several wealthy businessmen to invest in it. Albert Johnson, the president of the National Life Insurance Company in Chicago invested thousands of dollars in Scotty's mine without receiving a single gold nugget. Johnson became suspicious of Scotty and asked if he could come to Death Valley to see the gold mine for himself.

Scotty was only planning on having Johnson around for a couple of weeks , but he stayed in Death Valley for an entire month. The desert climate and vigorous activity improved many of Johnson's health problems. But perhaps the most captivating aspect of Death Valley was Scotty himself. Exploring the desert together, Scotty and Johnson began a friendship that would last the remainder of their lives. Albert and his wife Bessie enjoyed their repeated visits to Death Valley so much that they decided to build a vacation home in Grapevine Canyon. They named it Death Valley Ranch but Scotty, ever the publicity hound, called it his Castle.

Albert Johnson and Death Valley Scotty came from two very different places with very different backgrounds. Under normal circumstances, their paths might never have crossed. Yet these polar opposites had two things in common: a love of the desert and the joy of spending time in each other's company. Mr. Johnson treasured the friendship he had with Scotty more any money he may have lost in their adventures together, claiming, "Scotty repaid me in laughs." Johnson and Scotty had a unique association where friendship and a good story trumped the importance of money and the truth. Scotty's Castle is a monument to that friendship.



## Living History Tour

A trip through Scotty's Castle is a memorable part of any visit to Death Valley. Living History Tours are led by park rangers dressed in 1930s attire who take you back in time to the year 1939. You can see intricate details of the ironwork, hand-carved California redwood, clothes worn by Scotty and the Johnsons as well as original furniture. You will discover some of the amenities that made the Castle a truly unique home. You experience nearly all of the opulently furnished rooms inside the house including the Upper Music Room where you will be treated to the sounds of a 1,121 pipe theater organ. Everyday, ranger-led tours take visitors inside the Main House and Annex portions of the Castle each hour from May to October and more frequently from November to April. Buy your tickets at the ticket office upon your arrival to ensure your spot on the next available program. While you wait, the grounds of the Castle are open for exploration. You may explore the desert environment on a hike through Tie Canyon or take a stroll up to the stables where you will find weather-beaten cars that the Johnsons and Scotty owned. You can walk over to the power house to find generators and a Pelton water wheel used to provide power for the entire Castle complex. Another trail leads you up to Windy Point and Scotty's grave.

The National Park Service needs your help to protect the buildings and furnishings. Be sure to bring your flash cameras, but please leave your tripods, backpacks, and water bottles in your vehicle. Food, liquids, gum and tobacco products are all prohibited in the Castle. Please do not touch anything inside the Castle as skin oils and detergent can irreversibly damage the irreplaceable museum objects found throughout the house. With your help, Scotty's Castle will be here for future generations to enjoy.

## Underground Mysteries Tour

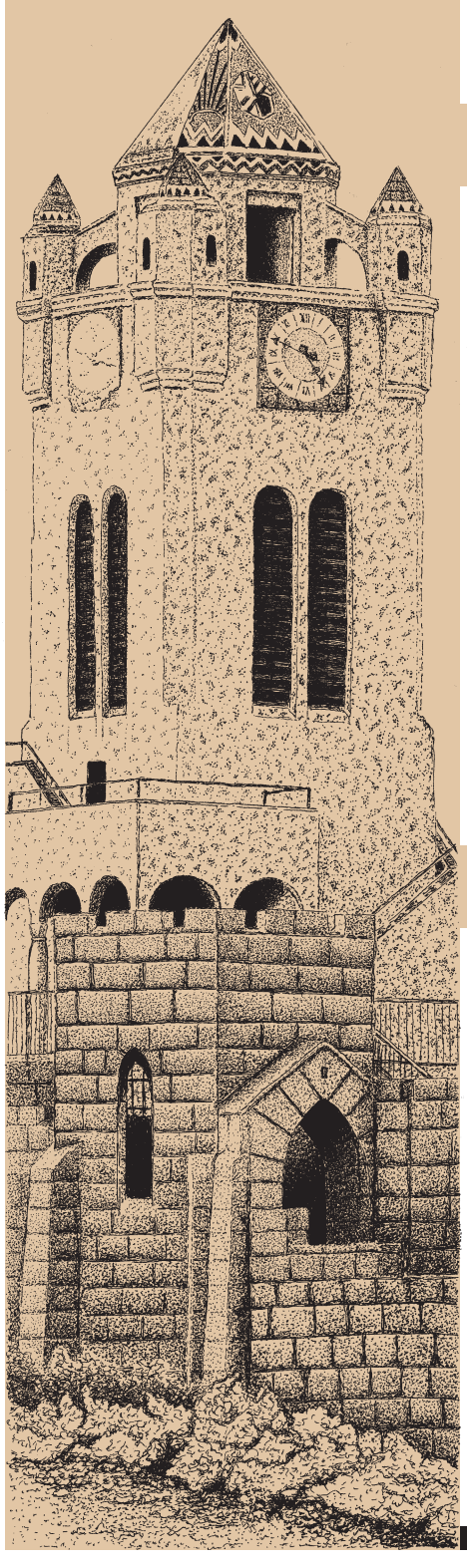
Visitors who tour the interior of Scotty's Castle walk away with diverse ideas about the Castle's significance. One of the most surprising is that Scotty's Castle is a technological mystery of self sufficiency and comfort.

Underground Mysteries tours are not just for engineers or the mechanically inclined. Most visitors are in awe of what lies beneath the Castle. Guided by a uniformed ranger, the tour takes visitors into the Castle basement, through a maze of tunnels, and into the Powerhouse.

The intricate one-quarter mile of tunnels beneath the Castle contain the historic utilities, including a battery room where energy was stored for latter use. Prior to 1964, electricity was primarily produced by a hydro-electric power plant, ran by water from a spring located in upper Grapevine Canyon. The historic utilities provided Castle residents with contemporary amenities and physical comfort.

Historic tiles are stored in the tunnels, including the swimming pool tiles. Visitors standing before the pool viewing windows can imagine how the swimming pool might have appeared had it been completed. The ranger will also show visitors how the National Park Service is preserving and protecting the Castle for the enjoyment of future generations.

Underground Mysteries tours are an interesting alternative for visitors who have already attended a living history Castle tour. For the first time visitor, combining both tours makes for a complete Castle experience. Underground Mysteries tours are not ADA accessible.



*Scotty's Castle chimes tower*

## Destructive Flash Flood Claims Two Lives

On the evening of August 15, 2004 a powerful, slow moving thunderstorm struck the Furnace Creek wash drainage south and east of the Furnace Creek developed area causing severe flash flooding throughout the area. Only a third of an inch of rain was recorded at Furnace Creek, but meteorologists with the National Weather Service estimated that areas affected by the thunderstorm may have received one to two inches of rain within sixty to ninety minutes, resulting in a record flash flood event. Hydrologist have estimated that the flood was anywhere from a 100 to 500 year event.

By the next morning, Death Valley National Park was closed by order of Superintendent JT Reynolds and the park's Chief Ranger had instituted an Incident Command System to handle the flood disaster. A helicopter was brought in by California Highway Patrol to search for victims.

An overturned vehicle was discovered in Furnace Creek Wash upstream from Zabriskie Point. The bodies of a man, age 48 and his mother, age 71 of Downey, California were found still strapped in their vehicle. On the plus side, a total of 15 persons survived the floodwaters, but ended up stranded overnight with their vehicles along sections of Highway 190 and on the Badwater Road. In addition, eight vehicles belonging to Xanterra Parks & Resorts employees were destroyed when they washed away from the parking area below the Furnace Creek Inn.

California Highway Patrol officers escorted two car caravans totaling 500 park visitors from the park after Caltrans and park road crews had cleared single lane routes through debris-covered roads. The park remained closed as the infrastructure was slowly repaired. Electrical power and phone service were established the next day, and the damaged water system was repaired in time for the park to re-open ten days later. Highway 190 east of Furnace Creek and many park roads suffered severe damage. Nearly thirteen miles of Highway 190, a California and federal Scenic Byway, have had to be rebuilt. The highway is scheduled to reopen in late spring 2005.

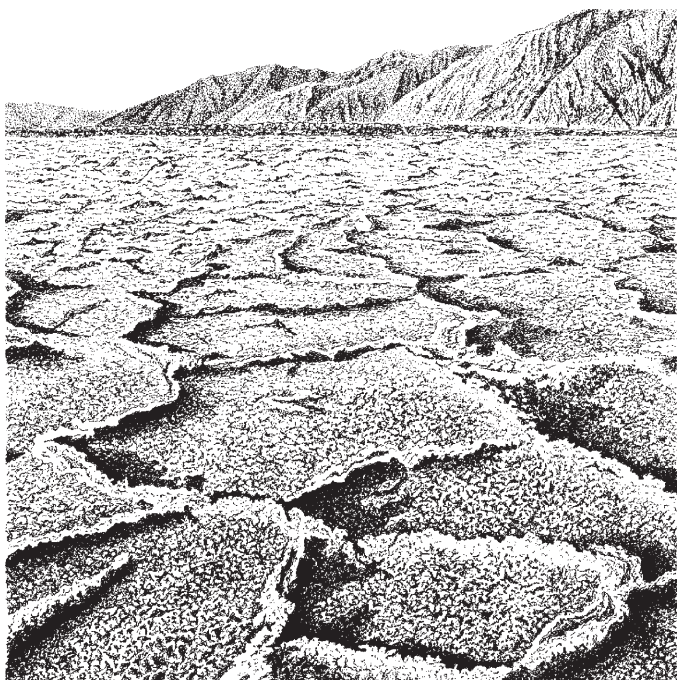
## Badwater Gets Facelift

Badwater Basin is famous as the lowest place in the Western Hemisphere at 282 feet below sea level, making it one of the most popular spots in Death Valley. The spring-fed pool on the edge of the salt flats has been visited by millions of people over the years. This has led to trampling of salt and plants along the pools edge, in turn threatening the rare endemic snail and other aquatic species that live in its salty water.

To protect Badwater pool and surrounding salt formations, and improve visitor access, the National Park Service undertook a year-long project that was completed and dedicated in November 2004. The project included an enlarged parking area, stablized slopes above the pool, a new boardwalk and interpretive exhibits.

This proved to be an interesting challenge at Badwater where temperatures soar over 120°F, the mud is too soft for piers and the salt eats away at anything that lays on it. Under these conditions, the structure you see there today will not last forever, however, it has been designed to be removable and to minimize impact to this fragile environment.

Two layers of plastic fabric separate the boardwalk from the salt pan below, allowing the whole structure to be peeled from the salt pan. The boardwalk is constructed of materials which will not harm the fragile life in the pools and take longer to be eaten away by the salt. In addition, the wall which holds up the walkway near the parking area is built so as to not disturb the shallow water table beneath it. This ensures that groundwater is allowed to flow into the pools, keeping them full. The wall also support the ramp that provides easy access to the pool and salt pan.



*Badwater Basin salt flats*

Signs of recovery are already evident at Badwater as patterns of salt crystals are growing on previously trampled areas around the pool. But your help is still needed to save Badwater and the salt flats from human impact:

- If you choose to walk the path leading further out onto the salt flats, please keep to the center of the trail to avoid widening it.
- Do not throw objects into the pool. Rocks are difficult to remove without causing more damage and coins corrode in the alkaline water, releasing metals that kill algae.
- Digging or scraping the surface of the salt flats leaves ugly scars that may take years to recover.

## Water Collection System To Be Updated

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to rebuild the outdated water collection system in the Furnace Creek area in order to deliver safe and reliable water to one of the park's main visitor use areas. As part of the redevelopment of the water collection system, the NPS proposes to restore historic wetland and riparian habitat and ensure the long-term conservation of species endemic to the area. In mid-year 2005, Death Valley National Park will release the Draft Furnace Creek Water Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review and comment. The EIS will present and analyze several sets of alternatives for management of these water resources.

The Texas-Travertine Springs complex in the Furnace Creek area may be the most critical water resource in the park. This series of springs provides water for all of the human needs in Furnace Creek area, including use by NPS facilities, the Furnace Creek Ranch and Inn, and the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe. In addition, the spring water supports several riparian areas, a biological community that includes habitat for at least eight endemic special-status aquatic species, and an important mesquite bosque.

The existing water collection system was installed in the 1970s and is nearing the end of its useful lifespan. In addition, when the system was installed, there was an incomplete understanding of the area's biological value and water conservation strategies were not a priority. The goal of the water management plan is to address these and other related issues.

*from top:bristlecone pine; charcoal kilns; Little Bridge; rock mimulus;salt detail*

# Planning Your Trip

## The Best Time to Visit

Death Valley National Park is usually considered a winter park, but it is possible to visit here all year. When is the best time to visit? It all depends on what you're looking for.

**Autumn** arrives in late October, with warm but pleasant temperatures and generally clear skies. The camping season begins in fall and so do the Ranger Programs, which continue through spring. Although it is relatively uncrowded at this time of year, the weeks leading up to Death Valley '49ers Encampment (second week in November) and the Thanksgiving holiday are busy.

**Winter** has cool days, chilly nights and rarely, rainstorms. With snow capping the high peaks and low angled winter light, this season is especially beautiful for exploring the valley. The period after Thanksgiving and before Christmas is the most uncrowded time of the entire year. Peak winter visitation periods include Christmas to New Years, Martin Luther King Day weekend in January and Presidents Day weekend in February. Reservations will be helpful.

**Springtime** is the most popular time to visit Death Valley. Besides warm and sunny days, the possibility of spring wildflowers is a big attraction. If the previous winter brought rain, the desert can put on an impressive floral display, usually peaking in late March to early April. Check our website for wildflower updates. Spring break for schools throughout the west brings families and students to the park from the last week of March through the week after Easter. Campgrounds and lodging are usually packed at that time, so reservations are recommended.

**Summer** starts early in Death Valley. By May the valley is too hot for most visitors, yet throughout the hottest months, visitors from around the world still flock to the park. Lodging and camping are available, but only the most hardy will want to camp in the low elevations in the summer. Most summer visitors tour by car to the main points of interest along the paved roads but do little else due to the extreme heat. Those wanting to hike will find the trails to Telescope and Wildrose Peaks are at their best in summer, but it is best to wait until autumn for most other hikes.

### Temperatures

| | Average Max | Average Min |
|---|---|---|
| January | **65°F** / 18°C | **39°F** / 4°C |
| February | **72°F** / 22°C | **46°F** / 8°C |
| March | **80°F** / 27°C | **53°F** / 12°C |
| April | **90°F** / 32°C | **62°F** / 17°C |
| May | **99°F** / 37°C | **71°F** / 22°C |
| June | **109°F** / 43°C | **80°F** / 27°C |
| July | **115°F** / 46°C | **88°F** / 31°C |
| August | **113°F** / 45°C | **85°F** / 29°C |
| September | **106°F** / 41°C | **75°F** / 24°C |
| October | **92°F** / 33°C | **62°F** / 16°C |
| November | **76°F** / 24°C | **48°F** / 9°C |
| December | **65°F** / 19°C | **39°F** / 4°C |

- Record High: **134°F** / 57°C July 1913
- Record Low: **15°F** / -9°C January 1913

Official weather station at Furnace Creek.

## Useful Books & Maps

The Death Valley Natural History Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing visitors to Death Valley National Park with a quality educational experience. These suggested offerings from our publications were chosen to help you plan your visit and make the most of the time you spend in Death Valley. Prices may change without notice.

**A Traveler's Guide to Death Valley National Park** (Lawson) Beautiful color photographs, informative text and maps organized into chapters describing areas of the park to visit in one day. 42 pages. $8.95

**Best Easy Day Hikes: Death Valley** (Cunningham & Burke) Includes concise descriptions and simple maps of 23 short, easy-to-follow routes within the park. 120 pages. $6.95

**Hiking Death Valley: A Guide to its Natural Wonders and Mining Past** (Digonnet) A comprehensive guidebook providing 280 hiking/driving destinations ranging from easy day hikes to multiple-day treks. 542 pages. $17.95

**Death Valley SUV Trails** (Mitchell) This is a four-wheeler's guide to 46 interesting back road excursions in the greater Death Valley Region. 314 pages. $19.95

**Death Valley National Park Guide Map** (Automobile Club of Southern California) A detailed map including points of interest, lodging and restaurants, campgrounds, supplies and services with descriptions. $3.95

**Southern Nevada & Death Valley Area Map** (California State Automobile Association) A map covering the area from Las Vegas to the Southern Sierra Nevada. Includes Death Valley, Lake Mead, Sequoia-Kings Canyon and Mojave Preserve. $3.95

**Death Valley National Park Map** (Trails Illustrated-National Geographic Maps) Waterproof, tearproof, 100% plastic topographic map. Included backcountry road descriptions, trails/routes, and safety tips. $9.95

**Death Valley Natural History Association**

P.O. Box 188
Death Valley, CA 92328

**1-800-478-8564**

devahstry@aol.com

## Nearby National Park Areas

### California

- **Devils Postpile National Monument**
  760-934-2289
  www.nps.gov/depo
- **Joshua Tree National Park**
  760-367-5500
  www.nps.gov/jotr
- **Manzanar National Historic Site**
  760-878-2932
  www.nps.gov/manz
- **Mojave National Preserve**
  760-733-4040
  www.nps.gov/moja
- **Sequoia-Kings Canyon Nat'l. Parks**
  559-565-3341
  www.nps.gov/seki
- **Yosemite National Park**
  209-372-0200
  www.nps.gov/yose

### Utah

- **Bryce Canyon National Park**
  435-834-5322
  www.nps.gov/brca
- **Cedar Breaks National Monument**
  435-586-9451
  www.nps.gov/cebr
- **Zion National Park**
  435-772-3256
  www.nps.gov/zion

### Arizona

- **Grand Canyon National Park**
  928-638-7888
  www.nps.gov/grca
- **Pipe Spring National Monument**
  928-643-7105
  www.nps.gov/pisp

### Nevada

- **Lake Mead National Rec. Area**
  702-293-8990
  www.nps.gov/lame
- **Great Basin National Park**
  775-234-7331
  www.nps.gov/grba

*coyote melon*

# Visitor Services

## Furnace Creek Visitor Center

**(760) 786-3200**

The Visitor Center is operated by the National Park Service. Open 8AM-6PM daily; 8AM-5PM December-February (excluding holidays) The Death Valley Natural History Association (a non-profit organization) operates the bookstore.

- **Orientation Programs**
- **Evening Programs**
- **Bookstore**
- **Information**
- **Museum**

Visit our Website at:

**www.nps.gov/deva**

## Furnace Creek Inn & Ranch

**(760) 786-2345**

Furnace Creek Inn & Ranch is privately owned and managed by Xanterra Parks & Resorts.

- **Motel**
- **Restaurants and Bars**
- **General Store**
- **ATM**
- **Gift Shops**
- **Swimming Pools**
- **Gas/Diesel** 24 HOUR W/ CREDIT CARD
- **Tire Repair & Towing**
- **Propane** 8AM - 4PM
- **Showers**
- **Laundromat**
- **Post Office**
- **Paved Airstrip**
- **Borax Museum**
- **Horse & Carriage Rides**
- **Golf Course**
- **Tennis Courts**

## Scotty's Castle

**(760) 786-2392**

Scotty's Castle is operated by the National Park Service. Living History tours are offered by park rangers. The concession is operated and managed by Xanterra Parks & Resorts. Grounds open 7:30AM-6PM

- **Daily Tours of Castle** 9AM-5PM
- **Self-guided Walking Trails**
- **Museum**
- **Bookstore**
- **Gift Shop and Snack Bar**
- **Gas Station** 9AM-5:30PM

**Tour fees:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Adults | $11.00 |
| Age 62 or over | $9.00 |
| Adults with a disability | $6.00 |
| Children (6-15 years) | $6.00 |
| Children under 5 | free |

## Stovepipe Wells

**(760) 786-2387**

Stovepipe Wells Village is a park concession, operated and managed by Xanterra Parks & Resorts.

- **Motel**
- **Restaurant & Bar**
- **RV Hook-ups**
- **Gas Station** 7AM - 9PM
- **Convenience Store**
- **Gift Shop**
- **ATM**
- **Swimming Pool**
- **Showers**
- **Paved Airstrip**
- **Ranger Station**

## Panamint Springs

**(775) 482-7680**

Panamint Springs Resort is privately owned and operated.

- **Motel**
- **Restaurant**
- **Campground**
- **RV Hook-ups**
- **Showers**
- **Gas Station** 24 HOUR W/ CREDIT CARD

## Medical Services

- **Beatty Clinic**
  Beatty, NV (775) 553-2208
- **Pahrump Urgent Care Facility**
  Pahrump, NV (775) 727-6060
- **Death Valley Health Center**
  Shoshone, CA (760) 852-4383
- **Southern Inyo Co. Hospital** Lone Pine, CA (760) 876-5501
- **Nye County Medical Center**
  Tonopah, NV (775) 482-6233

## Auto Repair

- **Furnace Creek Chevron:**
  AAA Towing Service (24 hour)
- **California:** Baker, Bishop, Lone Pine, Ridgecrest
- **Nevada:** Beatty, Pahrump, Tonopah

## Church Services

Interdenominational Christian Worship on Sundays at 9:00 AM at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center Auditorium.

## Recycling

Join the National Park Service, Xanterra Parks & Resorts, U.S. Postal Service and Timbisha Shoshone Tribe by recycling.

Look for recycling bins at the campgrounds, visitor center, ranger stations, post office and hotels.

- **Paper:** mixed paper, including magazines, books, & newspapers
- **Aluminum cans:** please crush
- **Glass containers:** please rinse
- **Plastic bottles:** rinse &

## Kids!

You can become a **Junior Ranger!**

Ask at the Visitor Center, Scotty's Castle, or any ranger station to find out how.

*Furnace Creek Inn*

# Death Valley National Park

**It is unsafe & against the law to feed wild animals.**

## UserFee

### Park Entrance Fee

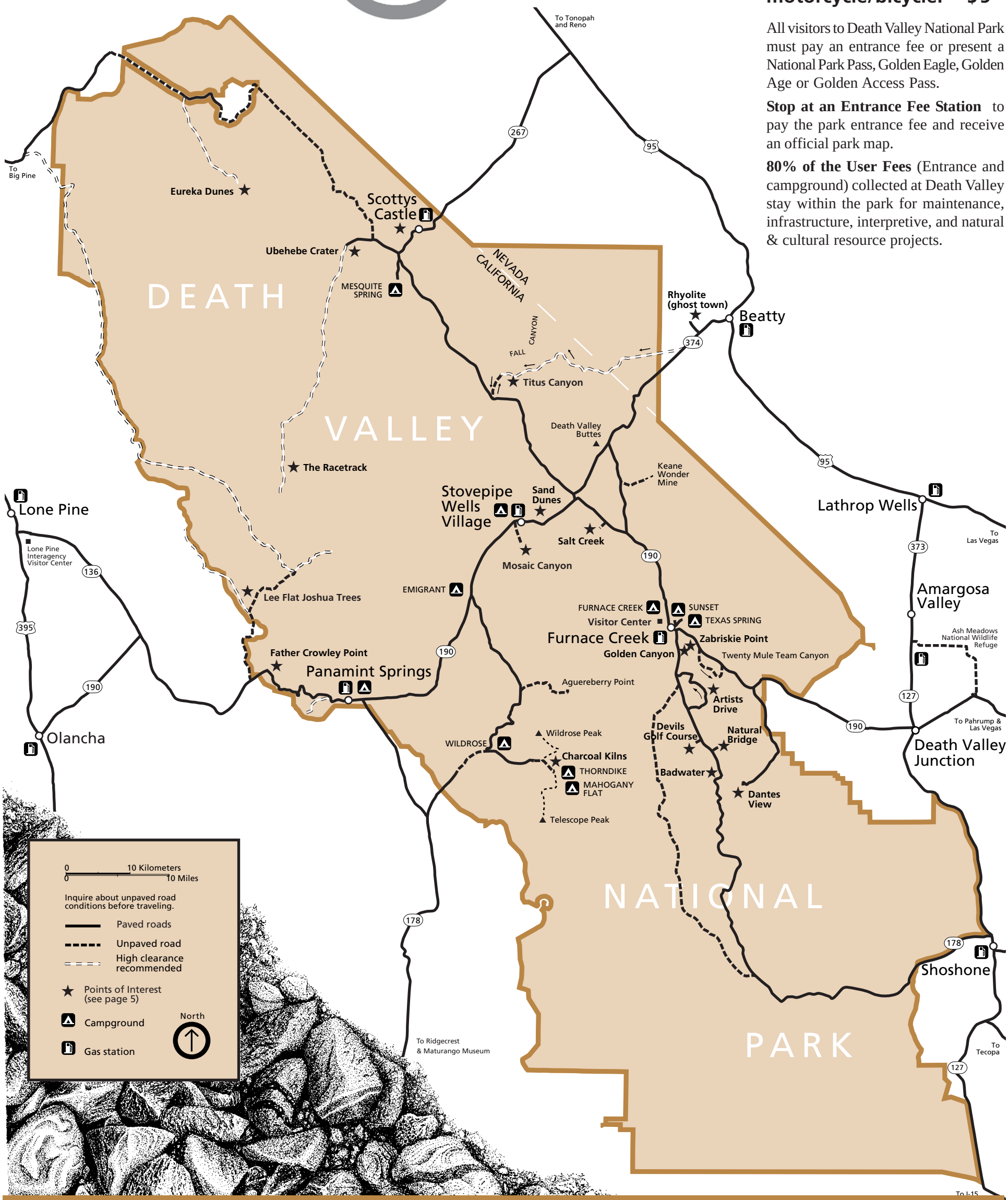
**vehicle** (non-commercial): **$10**

**motorcycle/bicycle: $5**

All visitors to Death Valley National Park must pay an entrance fee or present a National Park Pass, Golden Eagle, Golden Age or Golden Access Pass.

**Stop at an Entrance Fee Station** to pay the park entrance fee and receive an official park map.

**80% of the User Fees** (Entrance and campground) collected at Death Valley stay within the park for maintenance, infrastructure, interpretive, and natural & cultural resource projects.




A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO
**Death Valley National Park**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