



# Hiking Death Valley National Park and Southern Nevada

March 27, 2020 - April 5, 2020 (Trip# 2009)



*Death Valley and the Panamint Mountains from Zabriskie Point*

**Summary:** Death Valley is the largest National Park in the Lower 48 states and it is one of the few places in the U.S. where one can explore a desert floor and a few hours later summit a mountain peak covered in snow. On this 10-day adventure we will explore the canyons and peaks of Death Valley, as well as the beautiful red rock areas near Las Vegas.

After arriving in Las Vegas, we'll spend a day getting used to the heat by visiting the incredibly scenic Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada's oldest, and another day hiking in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. After three nights in Las Vegas, we'll leave the glitz behind and drive to the scenic and historic desert town of Stovepipe Wells in Death Valley. We'll enjoy moderate to challenging hikes ranging from 5 to 10 miles per day. We'll see wildflowers and wildlife, historic abandoned ghost towns and mines, rocky peaks, sheer cliffs and canyons, and experience the unique terrain and mountain air above 9,000' as we climb high desert peaks in eastern California. Our group plans to hike to the scenic summits of Wildrose Peak (9,064') and Corkscrew Peak in Death Valley. We will also hike and explore Mosaic Canyon and the maze of canyons to Zabriskie Point. We will experience the striking contrasts of "sand dunes and snowfields" while visiting desert terrain below sea level and the late-season snows high above the desert floor. Late afternoons can be spent relaxing at our motel pool, visiting nearby historic mining and town sites, or other attractions in the Park.

We will spend our last night back in Las Vegas and enjoy a farewell dinner before departing for home.



*Badwater Basin - lowest point in the U.S.*



# Daily Itinerary

Following is the daily itinerary which we plan to follow. Note that the hikes may be changed or days swapped (particularly in Death Valley National Park) to take advantage of the best weather.

## **Day 1 - Friday March 27**

Fly to Las Vegas, Nevada (2,000') where we will rent cars, gather supplies, have dinner and spend the next three nights.

## **Day 2 - Saturday March 28**

We begin our adventure with a one hour drive northeast to Valley of Fire State Park. The landscape features bright red Aztec sandstone outcrops nestled in gray and tan limestone. We will do as many of several possible short hikes to bring us to Balancing Rock, White Domes, Fire Wave, Rainbow Vista and Elephant Rock. Today will total 5 to 6 miles and 600 feet elevation gain. If time permits we will stop at the visitors center.



*Valley of Fire State Park*

### **Day 3 - Sunday March 29**

We will visit Red Rocks National Conservation Area which will include a stop at the visitors center to learn about the area. We will then begin our scenic Rim Drive with several stops including hikes to Calico Tanks and to Petroglyph Walls. Today will total 4 to 5 miles with 1200 feet of elevation gain.



*Red Rocks National Conservation Area*

### **Day 4 - Monday March 30**

Today we drive to Death Valley National Park with a stop at the grocery store along the way to pick up supplies for our lunches and some of our breakfasts while in DVNP. Once in the Park, we will stop at the visitor center and then explore the Furnace Creek area which may include scenic drives/stops at Badwater Basin (lowest elevation in the US), Artists Drive, Natural Bridge, Devil's Golf Course, Harmony Borax Works, and Mushroom Rock before checking into our hotel for the next five nights. If time permits we will also explore Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes. These will all be shorter hikes with total distance for the day of about 2 miles with minimal elevation gain.

### **Day 5 - Tuesday March 31**

We will climb to Corkscrew Peak which is a 7.4 mile hike with 3,200 feet of elevation gain. The hike features grand views overlooking Mesquite Flat, Grapevine Mountains, Funeral Range and central Death Valley. The last portion of the hike is steep but we soon will reach the summit ridge, pass the "hole-in-the-rock", and be on the summit with magnificent views. If time permits, a sunset visit to Twenty Mile Mule Team Canyon will round out the day.





*From Corkscrew Peak*

### **Day 6 - Wednesday April 1**

A wonderful canyon hike is planned today with a trip to Fall Canyon. Fall Canyon has been described as one of the most spectacular canyons. The first three miles of the canyon is a deep gorge getting deeper as we move further into the mountain. We will encounter narrows and falls along the way but they are all passable with a bit of effort. We will explore a few side canyons and return to our vehicles. The total hike for this day may be up to 10 miles with 1,700 feet of elevation gain depending upon when we turn around in the canyon.

### **Day 7 - Thursday April 2**

This morning, we explore Mosaic Canyon, known for its smooth, wavy white marbleized walls and “mosaic breccia” conglomerate rock. This 4 mile hike gains 750’ elevation and requires some scrambling around boulders and over dry falls. The afternoon will feature a drive and visits to the mill at Keane Wonder Mine and the ghost town of Rhyolite where we can see examples of mining in the park dating to early 1900’s.

### **Day 8 - Friday April 3**

Today will take us to the highest point of our trip at Wildrose Peak (9,064’) in the Panamint Mountains. Snow may exist at the higher elevations requiring the use of light traction such as

microspikes. This is an 8.4 mile hike with 2,390 feet of elevation gain and it starts at the Charcoal Kilns which converted lumber to charcoal for silver miners. Impressive views start just ¼ mile into the hike. From the summit we will see expansive views of Badwater Basin, desert landscape and the surrounding mountains. After the hike we will take a scenic drive on Aguerberry Point Road.



*From Wildrose Peak*

### **Day 9 - Saturday April 4**

On our last day in DVNP, we will finish exploring the Furnace Creek area by completing a 7.8 loop hike with an 834 feet elevation gain, through Golden Canyon, Gower Gulch and the Badlands to Zabriskie Point. This may be the most popular hike in the park. We'll weave our way through a maze of towering golden walls, colorful badlands and canyon narrows. The route involves minor rock scrambling, climbing over ledges and ducking under overhangs. We'll then drive back to Las Vegas for our final night. We will celebrate with a farewell dinner and reflect upon the trip's activities.

### **Day 10 - Sunday April 5**

Fly home



## Possible Itinerary Changes

While the itinerary in this prospectus is what the leaders have planned at the time of writing, various factors may require changes for reasons of safety, transportation or lodging availability, and unforeseeable circumstances (such as weather considerations, natural disasters in areas to be visited, or governmental or ranger recommendations). The leaders reserve the right to make such changes as necessary, both before and during the trip.

## Participant Profile

You should enjoy traveling and be comfortable traveling in areas which are unfamiliar to you. You should recognize that you may find yourself in closer quarters or be less comfortable than you are used to at home. You should make it a priority to help others on the trip and contribute to their having a great time. If you do that, we guarantee that you will have a great time.



*Hiking in Mosaic Canyon on a previous Adventure Travel trip*

This is a [moderate / vigorous](#) hike geared towards the outdoors adventurer and experienced hiker. You must be able to hike 5 to 10 miles per day at a moderate pace with elevation gains between 500 feet and 3,200 feet over the course of 4 to 6 hours, while carrying enough equipment to keep you safe in the event of bad weather or injury. Hikes are at altitudes between -282 and 9,000 feet. You must be comfortable hiking in the heat as well as the snow.

A detailed packing list will be provided to all participants well in advance of the trip.

## Experience & Risks

Death Valley National park is a land of harsh environments, There will be a great deal of sun exposure with temperatures of 80 to 100 degrees in the valleys while while it might be only 30 to 50 degrees on the high peaks. We'll stay hydrated with 3 + liters of water per day and focus on pacing up the peaks to avoid altitude sickness. They may be covered in snow requiring the use of micro-spikes to achieve the highest summit. The terrain will at times require the use of hands to scramble over scree, slick rock and dry falls within narrow canyons. Despite these challenges, with careful planning, preparation and teamwork, we'll endure the conditions and have fun exploring the vast beauty the region has to offer.

When you participate in this activity, you should be prepared both physically and mentally, and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. We are not responsible for your safety—you are.

Nonetheless, it may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of group or individual safety. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activity. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.

Prior to your being accepted as a participant in this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. We may also request references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating in trip activities. Please do not be offended by our questions.

## Safety

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with volunteer leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips and camps, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, by boat, or on a bike. When you apply for acceptance onto a trip, please carefully read and sign the *Adventure Travel Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement* and call if you have any questions.



# Trip Price

The trip cost is \$2100 per person for shared occupancy for AMC members. Non-members can join for \$50, and get the same price.

The price for this excursion is based on quotes or estimates obtained at the time the trip was planned. The final price of the trip will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases we incur will be shared by trip participants. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is more likely than a price increase. All Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis and refunds, if any, are issued after the trip's financial accounting is complete.

In accordance with AMC policy, you are subsidizing the leaders' costs. Beyond this, the leaders are not allowed to realize any profit from this excursion. The trip price includes an AMC overhead fee to cover the administrative expenses of offering Adventure Travel excursions. The trip fee also includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage, which is required by the AMC. It does not include insurance for travel delay, interruption, or cancellation, or for baggage loss. If these possibilities concern you, individual travel insurance is recommended. More information about included emergency medical and evacuation insurance, as well as about optional and recommended travel insurance, will be provided to participants in their formal acceptance letters, which will be sent out when the trip has the required number of accepted applicants.

A deposit of \$800 is due with the application. The balance of \$1300 is due by November 27, 2019.

Includes:

- Nine nights of lodging.
- Dinner for the entire trip, starting with dinner on March 27, 2020
- A combination of hotel breakfasts and early morning breakfasts with supplies obtained communally
- Car rental and gas.
- Park Entrance fees
- Emergency medical & evacuation insurance coverage.

Does not include:

- Airfare. The trip leaders will advise you and will facilitate group travel, but the purchase of tickets is the responsibility of the participant. At this time, we estimate that the cost for a round trip ticket between the US East Coast and Las Vegas will be in the range of \$550 to \$650.

- Lunches, beverages, trail snacks, personal items, optional activities, & incidental expenses.

## Photography

For those interested, this excursion can involve more than a splendid hiking trip. Dan is a talented, semi-professional photographer whose photographs have been exhibited and published in many places. Among other honors, he won the AMC photo contest three times. There is absolutely no requirement that you be interested in photography, or even bring a camera, and this is not a class or workshop. First, and foremost, it is a hiking trip in a beautiful region. However, if you are a seasoned photographer or a budding novice, or just curious, Dan will share his perspective on any of your photographic interests. When convenient we will try to be out in the early morning and early evening light to take advantage of the best times for photography (as well as coolest times of the day). Our hikes will also be paced to allow for photo stops.

## Accommodations / Meals / Transportation

We will spend the first three nights in Las Vegas at a hotel near the strip. We will then drive to Death Valley National Park where we will spend five nights in a hotel in Stovepipe Wells, CA. After exploring Death Valley we will return for our final night in the Las Vegas, NV area.

Dinners will be at local restaurants or at the hotels. Lunches should be “trail lunches” and are the participant’s responsibility. Breakfasts will either be at hotels with continental breakfasts, or simple and quick meals (bagels, yogurt, etc.) eaten in your room with supplies we pick up together and distribute. We will eat in our rooms on mornings where we want to get out early to beat the heat.

Some participants will be asked to share in the driving, which requires a check of your driving record. Please inform the leaders if you are willing to do this.

## Registration

We expect a group size of 16 people, including the 2 leaders. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible. When registration is complete, we will send all participants the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all those going on the trip. A waiting list will be established when the trip is full.

To apply, you must download, complete, and submit the applications documents which consist of:

- Application
- Confidential medical form
- Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form
- Supplemental Medical Questionnaire (optional)

The documents can be found here: [Death Valley Application Documents](#).

You will not be accepted and your check will not be deposited until the leaders have determined by telephone conversation with you that you and the trip are a good match. Deposit checks from waitlisted applicants will not be cashed until a spot is available, the applicant is accepted onto the trip, and they have confirmed their continued interest.

## Participant Cancellation Policy

Cancellations before May 1, 2019 will receive a full refund. Cancellations on or after May 1, 2019 will lose a minimum of \$200 of their deposit. Any additional refunds will only be made if it does not raise the cost of the trip to the other participants or leaders. There is a possibility that participants will not receive any refund. Participants are encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance. If the trip is cancelled by the AMC, participants receive a full refund for any deposits and payments.

Participants are responsible for their own airline tickets & other external expenses. Most airlines will not give refunds for cancellations; sometimes they issue coupons for a future trip with an administrative charge and an expiration date. Trip cancellation insurance is advised—policy information will be supplied to all participants.



# Leaders

## Dan Stone

Dan is a three-season leader with the Hiking/Backpacking Committee of the AMC Boston Chapter. He has co-led Adventure Travel trips to the Colorado Rockies and the Alsace in France. He has completed the 48 NH 4,000 footers in winter and hiked the entire Appalachian Trail mostly as a series of day hikes. He has traveled extensively, having visited 49 states and almost 60 countries. Dan led a series of AMC hiking weekends that incorporated photography. He enjoys sharing his photos and knowledge of photography with others. This will be his fifth Adventure Travel trip. Contact Dan at 617-750-0511 or [danstone987@gmail.com](mailto:danstone987@gmail.com).



## Larry Yetter

Larry is an active AMC leader with Adventure Travel, NH Excursions (Hiking) committee and AMC trail work weeks. He leads hikes in New England throughout all four seasons and is the Director of the AMC NH Winter Hiking Series. He has lived in four countries outside the US and visited over 30 others located on all seven continents. He has co-led an Adventure travel trip to Switzerland. This will be Larry's fourth Adventure Travel trip. Contact Larry at 603-554-8284 or [yetter95@gmail.com](mailto:yetter95@gmail.com).

