

CALIFORNIA

Death Valley National Park

A Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

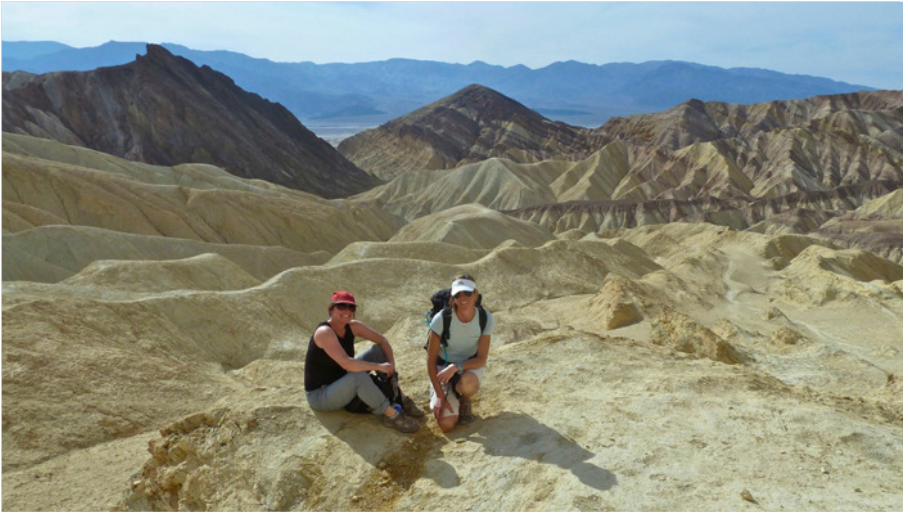
This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.



Overview

Death Valley, a place of superlatives—the lowest elevation in the Western Hemisphere, one of the world's hottest and driest deserts, the largest national park in the lower 48—is also a superlative walking destination. Walks in late fall and early spring showcase a stunning topography that ranges from the lowest elevation of 282 feet below sea level at Badwater Basin to the summit of Telescope Peak at 11,049 feet, with a myriad of colorful canyons, serene sand dunes, and striking rock formations in between. Established as Death Valley National Monument in 1933 and as a national park in 1994, it offers a wealth of trails, viewpoints, and landmarks.

Infinitely rich in geology, it is equally fascinating in flora and fauna—its wide range of elevation provides plant zones that are home to about 1,000 plant species. Especially spectacular—from mid-February through mid-April, this part of the Mojave Desert comes alive with poppies, verbena, various cacti, and desert star. The fall promises clear skies and moderate temperatures. Birds, reptiles, and mammals have adapted to this desert environment—hawks and hummingbirds, iguana and rattlesnakes, as well as mule deer, bighorn sheep, and wild burros, to name a few. Humans too: the Timbisha Shoshone and their ancestors farmed near springs and creeks here for millennia, and in the mid-1850s prospectors scouting for gold and silver had some success, while 20-mule teams became synonymous with borax mining lasting until the 1980s. A historic inn, set in a lush oasis garden of gurgling springs shaded by North African date palms, welcomes you to unwind and enjoy luxurious rooms, an inviting swimming pool, fine dining, and a toast with California wines.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Transfer to Death Valley. Stop at Zabriskie Point. Golden Canyon; 1-2 miles, easy; Gower Gulch; 4 miles, moderate

You meet your guide(s) and group at your meeting hotel in Las Vegas and board your van for the approximately 2½-hour drive northwest to the California border and Death Valley National Park. The park encompasses all of Death Valley itself, the 156-mile-long trough running north-south between two mountain ranges—the Amargosa Range to the east and the Panamint Range to the west, as well as several other valleys: Saline, Eureka, and Greenwater. Death Valley forms the northern arm of the Mojave Desert and is also a part of the Great Basin, which covers most of Nevada, half of Utah, and parts of Oregon and Idaho.

Your first views of Death Valley are from Zabriskie Point, which offers panoramic views of Golden Canyon from the top down—views you will appreciate later in the day when you see Zabriskie Point from Golden Canyon. You continue on to Artist’s Palette for a picnic lunch where, as its name suggests, you are surrounded by more colorful landscapes, here of volcanic sedimentary hills.

After lunch, you set off on an easy walk in Golden Canyon, entered through the narrow part of the canyon that leads into golden-hued badlands. The canyon formed millions of years ago when a lake filled Death Valley, and erosion of soft lake sediments has resulted in the primitive landscape. You eventually see the striking 400-foot cliffs of Red Cathedral and turn into Gower Gulch, where the rounded hills carved out by erosion have been used as other-worldly settings in science-fiction films.



Completing the walk, you take a short drive to your home for the next three nights, a luxurious historic inn set in a lush desert oasis, in operation since the 1920s. You have time to settle in to your room before gathering for a welcome cocktail and dinner in the inn's fine-dining restaurant.

The Inn at Furnace Creek, Death Valley National Park

A four-diamond historic resort offering luxury in the heart of Death Valley, this mission-style property is located on an oasis of palms and gardens surrounding a natural spring-fed swimming pool. Amenities include massage services, tennis courts, and gift shop.

DAY 2

Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes; 2-3 miles, moderate; Mosaic Canyon; 4 miles, moderate to challenging

Awakening to the clear desert light and stillness, you have breakfast at the inn before setting off for the Stovepipe Wells area of the park and a walk in the Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes. The morning light adds drama to these 200-foot-high graceful sand dunes that are scored with tracks of wildlife ranging from beetles, snakes, and lizards to rodents, rabbits, and foxes.

After a picnic lunch, today's afternoon walk to Mosaic Canyon is a wonderful introduction to exploring desert canyons. Named for its mosaic-like walls, composed of marble bedrock and breccia (small rock fragments embedded in natural cement), the canyon is situated at the north end of 6,600-foot Tucki Mountain.



You enter the canyon through its first narrow, which in some places is only a few feet wide, requiring single-file walking. The trail alternates between narrows and wider open washes, with the slopes of Tucki Mountain visible above where hardy desert holly and sage bushes have taken hold among the rocks. After walking through some rocky sections of the canyon with some rock

scrambling, you eventually emerge at a small amphitheater coated with candle-like mud drippings. Desert animals are elusive, but you may spot a hawk overhead, the ubiquitous raven, and perhaps a scuttling lizard or iguana.

After a full day of hiking, you make your way back to your inn and resort, where you have time to enjoy its extensive, beautifully designed gardens, spring-fed swimming pool, and spa facilities. For the evening meal, you venture a mile down the road to the Ranch at Furnace Creek for a more casual dining experience.

The Inn at Furnace Creek, Death Valley National Park

DAY 3

Ubehebe Crater rim walk; 1-2 miles, easy to moderate; Scotty's Castle tour; Titus Canyon, out and back; easy to moderate

After breakfast, a full day begins with the drive to Ubehebe Crater, a crater a half-mile in diameter that resulted from a massive volcanic explosion of superheated groundwater. A smaller crater, Little Hebe Crater, is nearby, linked by a trail that follows along the rim of the 600-foot-deep hole that the Shoshone referred to as the "Basket in the Rock."

Concluding the walk, you drive to the northernmost part of the park to find Scotty's Castle—a sprawling Spanish-Mediterranean mansion filled with antiques and custom-made furniture, wrought iron, and tile that reflects the heyday of the Roaring Twenties and the tall tales of "Death Valley Scotty," one of the region's most colorful prospectors. You can try to separate truth from fiction in a guided tour (Was it built by Scotty or his millionaire friends?) after enjoying a picnic lunch on the grounds.

This afternoon you may choose to head back to the inn to enjoy the spring-fed pool and grounds or venture on to another hike in a nearby canyon. Striking Titus Canyon—named for the prospector who disappeared nearby in 1906—is a geologically fascinating mix of rocks, from layers of limestone to intricate conglomerates, subject to millennia of the earth’s powerful shattering and re-forming pressure.



Rounding out the walk in the late afternoon, you are ready to return to the inn, and later gather for dinner in its casually elegant surroundings; enjoying an enticing menu of meat, fish, or vegetarian options accompanied by an excellent selection of California wines—a final celebratory evening.

The Inn at Furnace Creek, Death Valley National Park

DAY 4

Natural Bridge; 2 miles, moderate; Badwater; 40-minute walk on salt flat, easy. Departure from Las Vegas

This morning after breakfast at the inn (including their specialty date-nut bread from the inn’s own date palms) you check out, and enjoy two last short walks and stunning Death Valley landmarks. The first is Natural Bridge, a massive natural rock bridge about 35 feet above an intriguing canyon wash, reached after a short ascent on a gravel trail. You then move on to Badwater, not only the park’s lowest point, but also the lowest land elevation in all of North America, at 282 feet below sea level. An enormous expanse of white salt flats, Badwater Basin is a surreal landscape that lacks any shade, with topography made up of a buckled and cupped salt crust. Likely the hottest and driest point in the Western Hemisphere and perhaps even in the world, this is a landscape one could walk endlessly, but not in the hottest months! Returning to your van, you make the drive through to Las Vegas with a stop en route for lunch, arriving by mid-afternoon for your onward travels.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

For more than 36 years, Country Walkers has been a leader in active travel, with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Set in a lush oasis surrounded by a vast desert, **Furnace Creek Resort** is perfectly situated to explore the wonders of Death Valley National Park. However, it's the resort's deep commitment to responsible travel that initially attracted Country Walkers. To further their green initiatives, Furnace Creek installed a 1-megawatt solar system—the largest zero-emissions renewable-energy facility in the tourism industry! Located entirely on their grounds, 5,740 panels tilt throughout the day, tracking the sun to increase production. With enough energy to power 700 homes a year, the system will eliminate 29,000 tons of carbon dioxide over the next 25 years. Lauded for their environmental efforts by numerous agencies, Furnace Creek Resort epitomizes the type of accommodations Country Walkers seeks for all their active-travel adventures.

Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT

Hyatt Place Las Vegas (lobby), Las Vegas, NV, 8:00 a.m.

4520 Paradise Road
Las Vegas, NV 89169
Reservations 702.369.3366

NIGHTS 1, 2, & 3

The Inn at Furnace Creek

Death Valley, CA
Tel 760.786.2345
furnacecreekresort.com
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT

McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, NV, 3:30 p.m.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

4 days, 3 nights

DEPARTURE DATES

February 13, 2015

February 18, 2015

March 13, 2015

October 23, 2015

October 28, 2015

SCHEDULED GROUP TOUR PRICE

\$2,598 (Single+\$735)

PRIVATE TOUR PRICE

4–5 guests: \$2,898 (Single+\$735)

6+ guests: \$2,598 (Single+\$735)

This private tour is available daily, on request, from January 1 through April 30 and October 1 through December 31, 2015.

MEETING POINT

Hyatt Place Las Vegas (lobby), Las Vegas, NV, 8:00 a.m.

DEPARTURE POINT

McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, NV, 3:30 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate with options ranging from easy to challenging, with walks averaging 2 to 5 miles daily. Terrain varies from salt flats, sand dunes, and desert tracks to mountainous trails.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals included; wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will receive:

- » Guest Information and Acknowledgment Forms to complete and return at least 90 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide(s)
- » Your trip invoice

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day).

Traveling To and From Your Tour

MEETING POINT

Hyatt Place Las Vegas (lobby), Las Vegas, NV, 8:00 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking, as there will be a walk en route to our inn.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, NV
mccarran.com

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

The Hyatt Place Las Vegas offers a complimentary airport shuttle service. Once you are in the baggage claim area, please call the hotel at 702.369.3366, and they will tell you when to expect the next shuttle. The shuttle operates daily between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 12:15 a.m.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Country Walkers has blocked a number of rooms at the Hyatt Place Las Vegas for the night prior to your tour. To book a room online at a special rate of \$112 plus 12% tax go to **lasvegas.place.hyatt.com**, choose your check-in date and enter the corresponding code in the Group/Corporate # box and then click on “check availability.” Verify that your group name is specified next to rate details, and if everything matches, click “book.” The dates and codes are: February 12 (G-WLK1), February 17 (G-WLK2), March 12 (G-WLK3), October 22 (G-WLK8), and October 27 (G-WLK9).

Hyatt Place Las Vegas

4520 Paradise Road
Las Vegas, NV 89169
Reservations 702.369.3366
lasvegas.place.hyatt.com

The hotel offers a comfortable atmosphere featuring a swimming pool, 24-hour fitness center, complimentary continental breakfast buffet, and complimentary parking. We suggest booking a pre-tour room as soon as possible, as there may not be rooms available within 30 days of your departure. Our blocks of rooms are often confirmed months in advance and we obtain the best rate available at

the time. Less-expensive rates may be found on the Internet closer to the date of your actual stay.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed while traveling, or for any reason miss the scheduled group meeting, please phone the Hyatt Place Las Vegas and leave a message for your guide(s) regarding your estimated time of arrival. Since many of our tours begin on a weekend, and due to the time change, it is not advisable to leave this message at the Country Walkers office. Should you miss the scheduled meeting time you will most likely need to rent a car in Las Vegas. The drive to the Inn at Furnace Creek is approximately 2-2½ hours.

DEPARTURE POINT

McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, NV, 3:30 p.m.

If you plan to schedule your return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please contact your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$500 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$100; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.