

# Death Valley National Park Tour



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# Introduction: Highlights of Death Valley National Park





The Mesquite Flat Sand dunes create one of the most beautiful and iconic landscapes in Death Valley. The dunes are wonderful to photograph, especially when the light is low, accenting the undulating waves of sand with their ripple marks. Walking the dunes can be mesmerizing, watching new vistas unfold with every dune that has been

crested as sand flows like a liquid down the steep slopes. Running down the sand dunes is simply a blast.



Badwater Basin is the lowest point in North America, located 282 feet below sea level. It is covered with a layer of almost pure salt.



The rocks of Death Valley can be very colorful, especially at Artist's Palette, named for brilliant colors that resulted when volcanic ash was weathered into red, pink, green, and lavender sediments.



If you are lucky, you may get to see wild burros. Prospectors coming to Death Valley found that burros were well adapted to the harsh environment. Their offspring can still be found roaming throughout the park.



The broken chunks of salt at Devil's Golf Course weather into fantastic shapes. The center of the Death Valley salt pan is a harsh and forbidding landscape with its stark beauty.



Dante's View provides a sweeping overview of Death Valley. Perched one mile above the Valley floor one can get the best view of the mountains, alluvial fans, and salt pan of Death Valley.



Mosaic Canyon, named for its mosaic-like rock layers, provides the visitor the opportunity to take a beautiful hike in a classic desert canyon. The marble walls have been smoothed by flash floods.



A search for the gold fields of California brought a group of mid-Westerners to Death Valley. Burned Wagon Point is where they had to burn their wagons in order to make jerky from their slaughtered oxen. They eventually struggled successfully out of Death Valley.



Ubehebe Crater is an unusual volcanic landform created when magma reached the water table and the resulting steam explosion excavated this 600 foot crater.



Manly Beacon can be seen from Zabriski point. It is named for William Manly who successfully guided stranded 49ers out of Death Valley.



Zabriski Point is a good place to view the badlands. The yellow clay formed in an ancient lake bed weathers into these barren but beautiful hills.



At Harmony Borax Works you can see one of the original 20-mule team wagons that used to carry borax from Death Valley to Mojave.



At Salt Creek you may be able to catch a glimpse of pupfish, a species of feisty little fish that have survived in this salty creek since the last Ice Age.

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# Tips

- Do not visit Death Valley in the summer. It is simply too hot for a pleasant and safe visit.
- Always carry extra water and keep well hydrated.
- There are great distances between gas stations. Keep your eye on your gas gauge and be prepared to pay high prices when in the park.
- Check with the Park Service about road conditions. The route of this tour can be negotiated by sedan with low clearance, but many dirt roads in Death Valley require high clearance and/or 4-wheel drive.
- Rain is rare, but can be dangerous. Stay out of narrow canyons during rainstorms to avoid flash floods.
- Driving
  - From Los Angeles, about 275 miles
  - From Las Vegas, about 150 miles
  - From San Francisco, about 500 miles.

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