

NORTHERN
DESERT

WEATHER
Winter temperatures average 44° to 70°F/6.5° to 21°C. Temperatures soar in summer 76° to 108°F/24.5° to 41°C. Rainfall hovers around 2in./5cm.

SMART DESERT TRAVEL
Pack extra water and snacks, fill the gas tank and let others know your planned route—cellular reception is often spotty or nonexistent in remote areas.

Rich in natural treasures and Old West history, this massive area stretches from just north of **Twentynine Palms** to the northern border of **Death Valley National Park**. This is quintessential desert, with huge expanses of untouched wilderness, where temperatures soar high and rainfall barely dampens the desert floor.

But desolate? Hardly. Hundreds of species have adapted to this seemingly barren place. While visitors often beeline to the best-known destinations, savvy explorers know to add extra time for desert serendipity, with new parklands and other treasures luring you to linger and explore.

DID
YOU
KNOW?

*At 282 feet/86 meters below sea level, **Badwater Basin** in Death Valley National Park is the lowest spot in North America.*

MUST-SEES

- **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.** Get oriented at this huge park (biggest state park in California) at the visitor center in Borrego Springs. Get tips on easy rambles or all-day gut-busters, as wells as wildlife hot spots, Native American sites and, in late winter through spring, epic wildflowers.
- **Galleta Meadows.** See the lowering dragons, prehistoric elephants and other fanciful works created by self-laught metal sculptor Ricardo Breceda. Find a self-guided driving tour at the Borrego Springs Visitor Center.
- **Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge.** Named in honor of the late performer (and former Palm Springs mayor), this refuge protects habitat for clouds of migratory waterfowl in spring and fall.

HIDDEN GEMS

- **BMW Performance Driving School.** Professional racers improve your driving skills using high-performance BMWs at The Thermal Club, an exclusive racetrack and training facility south of Indio.
- **International Banana Museum.** Undeniably wacky, this goofy site in the tiny town of Mecca is home to 20,000 banana-themed items.
- **Off-road explorations.** If dune buggies, dirt bikes, and big-wheeled trucks are your thing, you'll love exploring Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Area and Algodones Dunes (Glamis) of the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.
- **Painted Canyon & Ladder Canyon, Mecca.** Popular hiking through a colorful high-walled, narrow gorge; ladders are placed along a slot canyon for scaling dry waterfalls.
- **Salvation Mountain, Niland.** Colorful adobe and straw-constructed mountain painted colorfully with Biblical messages.

MORE IDEAS | GREATER PALM SPRINGS VISITORS CENTER.

Free brochures, maps and tips on scenic drives, attractions, dining and lodging. 70100 Highway 111, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270; www.visitgreaterpalmsprings.com

VisitCaliforniaDeserts.com

12/2018

CENTRAL
DESERT

MUST-SEES

- **Death Valley National Park.** Catch the sunrise at Zabriskie Point, explore Badwater Basin and Artist's Drive, tour Amargosa Opera House, dine at Inn at Furnace Creek and on and on: This massive park could fill an entire vacation. Get oriented at Furnace Creek Visitor Center or Stovepipe Wells.
- **Mojave National Preserve.** Discover cinder cones, Joshua tree forests, dunes that "sing" and a tiny town that ran out of proper vowels. (It's Zzyzx, pronounced "Zye-zix.") Spring brings carpets of wildflowers.
- **Route 66.** Reltrace the route of this iconic highway from the Arizona border at Needles west to Barstow, home of the Route 66 Mother Road Museum.

HIDDEN GEMS

- **Amboy Crater/Mojave Trails National Monument.** Fiery eruptions some 80,000 years ago created this eye-catching cinder cone, a designated national natural landmark and now protected within the massive national monument, designed in 2016.
- **Castle Mountains National Monument.** This magical preserve wrapped by Mojave National Preserve protects the soaring spires of Castle Peaks.
- **Calico Ghost Town.** Once an 1880s silver-mining town, this kid-favorite attraction offers mine tours, off-road adventures, gold panning and camping.
- **Keane Wonder Mine.** One of the best examples of historical gold mining in Death Valley National Park re-opened to the public in November 2017. The mine's aerial tramway from the early 1900s still has ore buckets hanging from cables; miners used the tramway to lower 70 tons of gold ore per day down the steep Funeral Mountains.
- **Kelso.** The Kelso Dunes rise more 600 feet from the desert floor in the Mojave Preserve. Visit Kelso Depot, former 1924 Union Pacific Railroad station, now information center and museum.
- **Mitchell Caverns.** California's equivalent to the Carlsbad Caverns has been closed to the public for nearly seven years. In November 2017, the Mitchell Caverns re-opened for public tours. As the only limestone caves in the California State Park system (and only one of two you can enter), the natural attraction offers fascinating stalactite and stalagmite formations going back to the Pleistocene epoch.
- **Mojave Air & Space Port.** Take a self-guided tour of this sprawling aerospace facility, 60 miles west of Barstow in Mojave. See supersonic aircraft and the home of Virgin Galactic, a big player in the race to launch commercial sub-orbit space travel.
- **Red Rock Canyon State Park.** Reminiscent of Utah with scenic desert cliffs, buttes, fossils and spectacular rock formations with canyons painted in vivid colors.

MORE IDEAS | CALIFORNIA WELCOME CENTERSM, BARSTOW

Free brochures, maps and tips on scenic drives, attractions, dining, and lodging. 2796 Tanger Way, Suite 100, Barstow, CA 92311; www.visitcalifornia.com/attraction/california-welcome-center-barstow

SOUTHERN
DESERT

MUST-SEES

With borders touching Mexico to the south and Arizona to the east, this is a land built for adventure. The east side holds **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park**, with lush palm oases, colorful slot canyons, ancient pictographs and abundant wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep. ("Borrego" is the Spanish word for sheep.) Keep your eyes peeled and you might spy these agile mammals, with fur the color of desert stone, roaming the rocky slopes or drinking at a spring.

The town of **Borrego Springs** is a relaxed haven for artists and desert rats. Enjoy galleries and shops, lodging and dining ranging from basic to luxurious. East of Borrego Springs is the **Salton Sea**, a saline inland lake with camping, trails and wildlife, particularly birds—more than 375 species have been recorded in the Salton Sea and surrounding **Imperial Valley**.

HIDDEN GEMS

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CENTRAL
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MUST-SEES

Packed with natural and manmade treasures, this region buzzes with activity year-round. To the north is **Joshua Tree National Park** and the artsy town of Joshua Tree. To the west is Cabazon, with countless outlet stores. Desert communities, collectively known as **Greater Palm Springs**, stretch south along the eastern base of the wall-like San Jacinto Range.

The region's original inhabitants were **Agua Caliente Native Americans**, with a history spanning some 2,000 years. In 1774, Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza visited, and, by the late 1880s, a town had sprung up, thanks to a huge underground aquifer. In the 1930s, '40s and '50s, Hollywood stars and filmmakers came to relax at posh resorts between shooting movies in Hollywood. Stars like Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra built lavish midcentury modern homes, some open for tours or stays. A new generation of stars is rediscovering the region, and a young vibe keeps things lively year-round.

HIDDEN GEMS

Free brochures, maps and tips on scenic drives, attractions, dining, and lodging. 56711 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley, CA 92284; (760) 365-5464; cwcdrtla.org

MORE IDEAS | CALIFORNIA WELCOME CENTERSM, YUCCA VALLEY.

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DISCOVER THE DESERTS

Vast, varied and beautiful, California's Desert Region offers countless places to explore, relax and play. Escape to dramatic parklands with classic desert vistas of sand dunes, wind-swept valleys and epic sunsets. In Greater Palm Springs, relax at exclusive hideaways or family-friendly resorts. Play golf and tennis, shop, dine, see striking architecture and art, spot A-list celebrities at music extravaganzas and film festivals and relax under the desert stars.

EASY ACCESS Flights from hundreds of cities worldwide access the region via Palm Springs International Airport (PSP) or other major gateways such as San Diego, Los Angeles and Las Vegas that lead to **Death Valley National Park** (largest national park outside Alaska), **Joshua Tree National Park**, and **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park**. For adventurous exploring, rent a 4-wheel-drive vehicle to follow backcountry roads in these and other parks, including some of the country's newest national monuments.

LODGINGS, EVENTS, DEALS

Lodgings range from campsites and budget-friendly motels to romantic B&Bs and splurge-worthy resorts. Winter and spring tend to be busiest, with mega-events like **Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival** attracting crowds and **desert wildflowers** at their peak in Anza-Borrego. Summer temperatures climb, but what used to be a quiet time has morphed into a secret find, with new events and great deals well into fall.

RESOURCES

Chambers of Commerce & Visitors Bureaus

Anza Valley anzachamber.com	Inyokern inyokern.net
Baker Area bakerc.com	Joshua Tree Gateway Communities visitjtc.com
Barstow barstowchamber.com	Lone Pine Chamber lonepinechamber.org
Blythe blythechamberofcommerce.com	Mojave visitmapojave.com
Borrego Springs visitborrego.com	Morongo Valley 92256.net/chamber
Brawley Chamber brawleychamber.com	Needles needleschamber.com
Calixico calixicochamber.net	Palm Springs visitpalmsprings.com
California City californiacitychamber.com	Parker Area Chamber parkeraz.org
Death Valley deathvalleychamber.org	Ridgecrest ridgecrestchamber.com
El Centro elcentrachamber.org	Twentynine Palms 29chamber.org (chamber), visit29.org (visitors bureau)
Greater Palm Springs visitgreaterpalmsprings.com	Westmorland cityofwestmorland.net
Holtville holtvillechamber.org	Yucca Valley yuccavalley.org
Imperial imperialchamber.org	

VISIT
CALIFORNIA
DESERTS

MUST-SEES

- **Desert Hills Premium Outlets.** Find incredible bargains at everything from Armani and Tory Burch to Banana Republic and Calvin Klein in more than 180 stores.
- **El Paseo.** Nicknamed "Rodeo Drive of the Desert," this flower and art-trimmed strip in Palm Desert is home to Chanel and other designer boutiques.
- **Joshua Tree National Park.** Native Joshua trees give the park its name, and unique plants and animals abound. Bulbous rock formations make "J-Tree" popular with rock climbers (lessons available), plus there are day hikes, camping and historic sites.
- **Indian Canyons.** On Agua Caliente tribal land, the canyons are just minutes from downtown Palm Springs and a world away with undisturbed natural beauty from palm oases to waterfalls.
- **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.** Soar 8,500 feet/2,950 meters above the desert floor to pine-shaded Mount Jacinto State Park. Trails lace the forest, and epic views abound.
- **Sunnylands.** Tour the breathtaking Rancho Mirage estate of publishing magnate Walter Annenberg and his wife Lenore. Book well in advance for house tours; admission to gardens is free. Closed in August.

HIDDEN GEMS

- **Empire Polo Grounds.** While arguably best known as the site of annual music blowouts like Coachella and Stagecoach, it's also a great place to watch polo matches. Season runs January to early April.
- **Gubler Orchids.** A unique nursery with greenhouses filled with colorful orchids and exotic plants.
- **Integratron.** An all-wood acoustical sound chamber with a mystical history and "sound bath" experiences.
- **Noah Purifoy's Outdoor Desert Art Museum.** Ten acres of desert land near Joshua Tree devoted to more than 100 sculptures assembled from unique finds.
- **Oasis of Murals.** Take a self-guided tour of the historical murals in downtown Twentynine Palms.
- **Pappy & Harrier's Pioneerstown Palace.** Part of a former movie set for Westerns, this modest venue is a magnet for quality music.
- **Sand to Snow National Monument.** This new monument links to Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and the Whitewater Preserve, offering outstanding hiking, birding and desert beauty near Cabazon.
- **Smith's Ranch Drive-in.** One of the last American drive-in movie theaters, offering double features under the stars.
- **The Living Desert.** This family favorite has excellent exhibits showcasing plants and animals from desert environments worldwide.

MORE IDEAS | CALIFORNIA WELCOME CENTERSM, YUCCA VALLEY.

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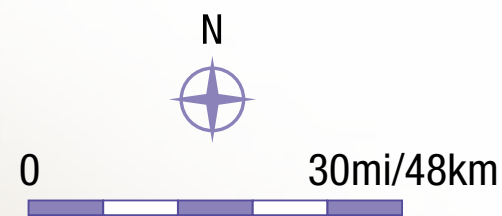
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










DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

ENGLISH



VisitCaliforniaDeserts.com



-  BLM Land
-  Military Land
-  Park
-  Attraction
-  Natural Area
-  National Monument
-  State Park
-  California Welcome Center
-  Major Airport
-  Rest Area
-  Wildlife Viewing Area

