

VISIT CALIFORNIA DESERTS



DESTINATION OVERVIEW

California is home to three main deserts: Mojave, Colorado and Great Basin. Unlike anywhere else in the state, or for that matter the world, the California Deserts are a “theme park” of adventure, history and exploration. The region lures visitors to elevations of thousands of feet above to more than 280 ft/85 m below sea level, offers health and wellness in the natural hot mineral waters that bubble to its surface and lays claim to hundreds of old mines and ghost towns hidden in its mysterious hills and valleys.

The warm air may draw visitors, but any number of other world-class attractions keeps them coming back. Death Valley National Park, Historic Route 66, Joshua Tree National Park, Greater Palm Springs and many other attractions of the California Deserts are easily accessible from several gateway cities providing the perfect, convenient setting for unforgettable experiences.



DESERT REGION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Amboy Crater:** Recognized for its visual and geological significance, Amboy Crater is an excellent example of a very symmetrical volcanic cinder cone.
- **Galleta Meadows (Borrego Springs):** Discover artist Ricardo Breceda’s steel welded sculptures of prehistoric and modern animals.
- **Main Street Murals (Barstow):** Explore a walking gallery of historic murals along Route 66’s last existing Main Street. Join one of the hosted or self-guided walking mural tours.
- **Mane Street Stampede Wild West Show (Pioneertown, April-October):** Experience the excitement of the American West as performers bring to life the Old West in re-enactments.
- **Mitchell Caverns:** The only limestone caves in the California State Park system, reopened for public tours in November 2017, allowing visitors to once again view the intricate stalagmite and stalactite formations, as well as prehistoric fossils, in this remote area of the eastern Mojave.
- **Nature Walks (Twentynine Palms):** Set out from the historic 29 Palms Inn for a walk through the Oasis of Mara with a naturalist.
- **Petroglyph Park (Ridgecrest):** Tour Kern County’s newest park, featuring renditions of ancient Native American rock art.
- **Sky’s the Limit Observatory & Nature Center (Twentynine Palms):** Explore the desert night sky at free star-viewing events every Saturday, except during full moons.
- **Sunnylands (Rancho Mirage):** The estate of former US Ambassador to Great Britain, Walter Annenberg, features an interactive visitor center and gardens that are open to the public.
- **VillageFest (Palm Springs):** Every Thursday evening year-round in downtown Palm Springs. Enjoy a diverse array of arts and crafts, entertainers, a Farmer’s Market, international cuisine and more.

DESERT REGION AVERAGES

Month	Avg High (°F / °C)	Avg Low (°F / °C)	Avg Precip (in/cm)
Jan	70/21	44/6.5	1.16/2.95
Feb	75/24	47/8	1.2/3.05
Mar	80/26.5	51/10.5	.49/1.24
Apr	86/30	56/13	.05/1.3
May	94/34.5	63/17	.02/0.05
Jun	104/40	70/21	.02/0.05
Jul	108/42	76/24.5	.14/3.6
Aug	107/41	76/24.5	.29/7.4
Sep	101/38	70/21	.22/5.9
Oct	91/33	61/16	.20/5.1
Nov	76/24.5	48/9	.38/9.7
Dec	70/21	40/4.5	.7/1.78
Annual	90.5/32.5	62.3/16.8	2.28



DRIVING DISTANCES

We invite you to explore the individual regions of the California Deserts and discover a world you possibly never knew existed—one that is vibrant yet remote, colorful and camouflaged, rustic but luxurious—providing magnificence found only in The Golden State.

CALIFORNIA DESERT DESTINATIONS

GATEWAY CITIES

	Greater Palm Springs	Las Vegas	Los Angeles	San Diego	San Francisco
Barstow	123 mi/198 km	164 mi/ 264 km	115 mi/ 185 km	176 mi/ 283 km	413 mi/ 665 km
Borrego Springs / Ocotillo Wells	87 mi/ 140 km	344 mi/ 554 km	151 mi/ 243 km	87 mi/ 140 km	530 mi/ 853 km
Death Valley National Park	299 mi/ 481 km	130 mi/ 209 km	288 mi/ 463 km	352 mi/ 566 km	529 mi/ 851 km
Greater Palm Springs		239 mi/ 385 km	107 mi/ 172 km	133 mi/ 214 km	487 mi/ 754 km
Joshua Tree National Park	49 mi/ 79 km	194 mi / 312 km	131 mi/ 211 km	151 mi/ 243 km	494 mi/ 795 km
Mojave National Preserve	153 mi/ 246 km	152 mi/ 245 km	230 mi/ 370 km	292 mi/ 470 km	529 mi/ 851 km
Needles	171 mi/ 275 km	120 mi/ 193 km	256 mi/ 412 km	284 mi/ 457 km	555 mi/ 893 km
Ridgecrest	171 mi/ 275 km	245 mi/ 394 km	152 mi/ 245 km	224 mi/ 360 km	395 mi/ 636 km

TRIP ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

DESERT TO WATERS

- Colorado River (Needles - Earp)
- Desert Hot Springs mineral waters (Desert Hot Springs)
- Mojave River (Barstow)
- Oasis of Mara (Twentynine Palms)
- Salton Sea
- Tahquitz Falls (Palm Springs)
- Tecopa Hot Springs (Tecopa)
- Whitewater Preserve (Whitewater)

GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS

- Ballarat
- Calico Ghost Town (Yermo)
- Harrisburg
- Panamint City
- Ragtown
- Randsburg Ghost Town

MUSEUMS

- Agua Caliente Cultural Museum (Palm Springs)
- Cabot's Pueblo Museum (Desert Hot Springs)
- Coachella Valley History Museum (Indio)
- Desert Discovery Center (Barstow)
- General Patton Memorial Museum (Chiriaco Summit)
- Hi-Desert Nature Museum (Yucca Valley)
- Kelso Depot (Kelso)
- Maturango Museum (Ridgecrest)
- Old Schoolhouse Museum (Twentynine Palms)
- Palm Springs Air Museum (Palm Springs)
- Palm Springs Art Museum (Palm Springs)
- Route 66 Mother Road Museum (Barstow)
- Ruddys 1930's General Store Museum (Palm Springs)
- US Naval Museum of Armament and Technology (China Lake)
- Western America Railroad Museum (Barstow)

NATIONAL/STATE PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- Castle Mountains National Monument
- Death Valley National Park
- Fossil Falls
- Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area
- Joshua Tree National Park
- Mitchell Caverns
- Mojave National Preserve
- Mojave Trails National Monument
- Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area
- Red Rock Canyon
- Sand to Snow Monument
- Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument
- Trona Pinnacles
- Whitewater Preserve

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Birding
- Camping
- Golfing
- Hiking
- Mountain Biking & Cycling
- Off-roading
- Rock Climbing/Bouldering
- Snow play
- Stargazing

SCENIC ROUTES

- Highway 62 (Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms)
- Highway 111 (Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Indio)
- Highway 395 (Ridgecrest, Inyoken, Olancho, Lone Pine)
- Historic Route 66 (Barstow, Newberry Springs, Ludlow, Amboy, Essex, Needles)

FLORA AND FAUNA

- Anza-Borrego State Park
- Borrego Springs
- Death Valley National Park
- Gubler Orchids (Landers)
- Joshua Tree National Park
- Ridgecrest

