

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

## DAY 1

### Arrive Las Vegas, Introductions and Welcome Dinner

Winter time provides excellent hiking in Death Valley, with temperatures in the high 60's to low 70's. Our trip starts today in Las Vegas. Arrive any time before 5:00 p.m. and catch a convenient shuttle or rideshare to our hotel, where we will meet at 5:30 p.m. We'll start getting to know each other and review our plans for the trip, before sharing our first dinner. The evening is free for you to get to bed early or wander the strip. (D)

## DAY 2

### Drive to Death Valley via Rhyolite and Hell's Gate, Visitor's Center and Badwater Basin

Today we will make our way to Death Valley National Park, a drive that takes about 2.5 hours. Weâ€™re headed first to Rhyolite, the historic ruins of a 1905 goldmining town built on silica-rich volcanic rock laced with gold! Rhyolite lies just outside the northern entrance to the park. We enter the park from this direction, through Hellâ€™s Gate where youâ€™ll get your first introduction to the complex geology of the area. After a picnic lunch weâ€™ll make our way to the Visitors Center and then on to our lodging for the next 3 nights - the Oasis at Death Valley. Once weâ€™ve unloaded our luggage, thereâ€™s one more spot to visit before our first day is over â€“ Badwater Basin - one of the most famous places in Death Valley! Bad Water Basin is the lowest point in North America, with an elevation of 282 feet below sea level! Geologically, Bad Water Basin is a salt pan that is covered each year by rainfall. Weâ€™ll take a walk on the salt pan and marvel at the salt formations before heading back to the Oasis for dinner and our first overnight in the valley. Overnight: Oasis at Death Valley. (B, L, D)

## DAY 3

### Hike Golden Canyon-Gower Gulch Loop, Mesquite Dunes and Historic Stove Pipe Wells and Star Gazing!

Death Valley is a huge park, a fact we will appreciate more fully after today. This morning we will first hike the Golden Canyon-Gower Gulch Loop. This 4.5-mile loop trail first takes us through colorful Golden Canyon and then up and over a ridge, passing beneath Manley Beacon. The trail then drops into Gower Gulch, another canyon but with a completely different feel and footing than Golden Canyon. The loop ends with a traverse along the base of the cliffs that rise abruptly from the flatter plain below. (Note: This hike may be done in the opposite direction.) Lunch today will be along the trail, perhaps at the top of the hike under Manly Peak with its magnificent views of the golden mudstone hills of this gulch. Returning to our lodging weâ€™ll take a short break before heading off to our afternoon activities. Depending on weather and interest there are lots of choices, including taking the rest of the afternoon to relax. Regardless of your afternoon choice, the group will once again gather, this time heading to Mesquite Dunes - spectacular sand dunes that stretch as far as the eye can see â€“ an excellent time to play in the sand and enjoy the sunset. After enjoying the dunes, weâ€™ll head into the nearby historic Stovepipe Wells settlement for dinner. If the skies are clear, perhaps one more stop on the way back to the Ranch at the Dunes for a bit of star gazing - wide open skies and no ambient light! A fun day! Overnight: Oasis at Death Valley (B, L, D)

## DAY 4

### Hike Ubehebe Crater, Salt Creek Interpretive Trail, Free Afternoon with Guide Offered Options

We'll begin a bit early this morning to make sure we have time for everything! After driving an hour into the northern part of the Park, our first stop will be the 600-foot deep Ubehebe Crater, the remnants of a massive hydrovolcanic explosion 300 years ago. We will hike along the west rim of the Crater to Little Hebe and several other craters, before continuing around the rim for a total of 1.5 miles. After conquering the crater, weâ€™ll enjoy a picnic lunch and then visit Salt Creek Interpretive Trail. An easy boardwalk takes us to the Creek, a stream of salty water that is the only habitat of the endangered pupfish. Back at the ranch, the rest of the afternoon is free. Your guides will have options for short hikes or perhaps you'd prefer some time lounging in the outdoor swimming pool, coloring outside reading that good book you

Your guides will have options for short hikes or perhaps you'd prefer some time lounging in the outdoor swimming pool, relaxing outside reading that good book you brought. Or you could visit the Borax Museum on property - all good choices! We'll gather late afternoon for appetizers prior to dinner and to talk about our time in this beautiful desert valley. Overnight: Oasis at Death Valley (B, L, D)

## **DAY 5**

**Leave Death Valley, visit Zabriskie Point, return to Las Vegas by 3 p.m.**

Today we have to head back to our real lives but we'll do a bit of exploring along the way. On the way out of the park, we'll stop at another famous spot, Zabriskie Point for a last look over the valley and a chance to get those last geology questions answered. On the way back to Las Vegas there are a couple of other stops possible depending on timing which would include a visit to the Amargosa Opera House in Amargosa and lunch at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge for a last chance to see pup fish. We will return to the Las Vegas Airport by 3:00 p.m. and you can either plan to fly out after 5:00 p.m. or stick around and try your luck. (B, L)