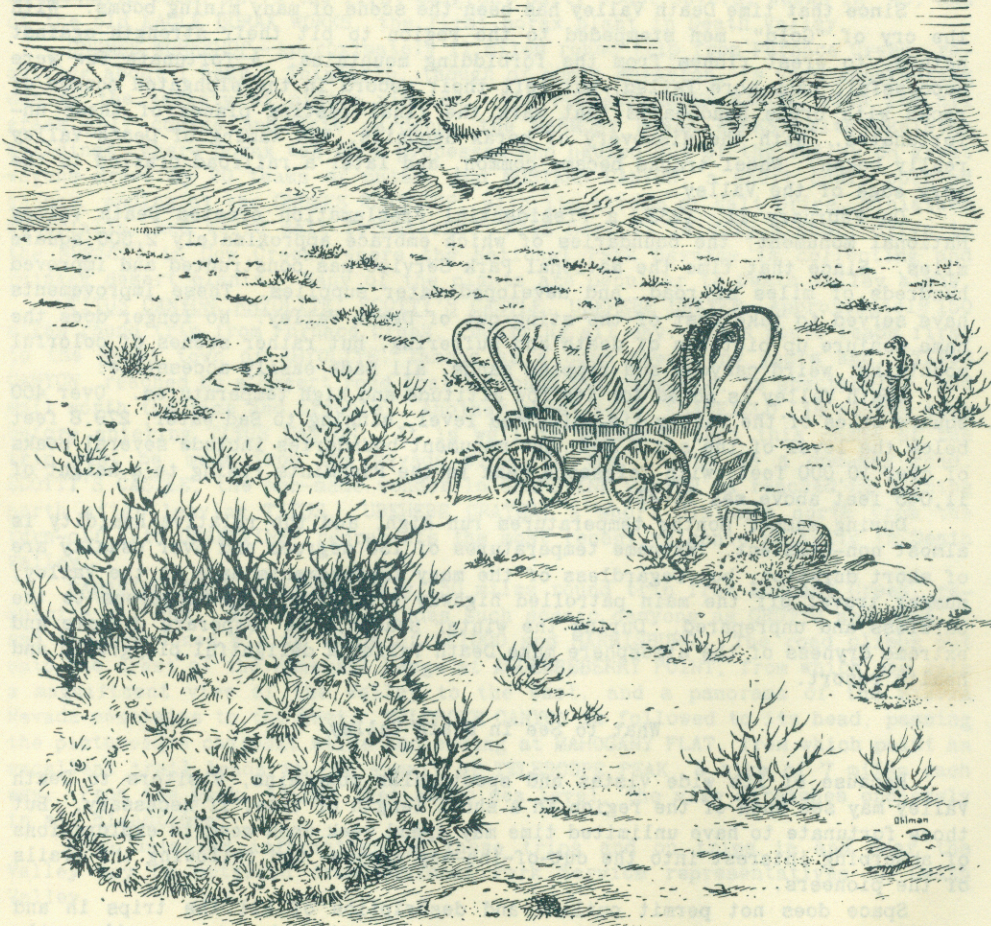


# DEATH VALLEY

## NATIONAL MONUMENT

### CALIFORNIA



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

HAROLD L. ICKES, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ARNO B. CAMMERER, Director



# DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT

## California

"Goodbye, Death Valley." This farewell, uttered by one of a party of pioneers, named for all time the great desert valley that is the dominating feature of the country adjacent to the Mojave Desert on the north. Seeking a shorter route to the gold fields of California in late December 1849, the frontiersmen had wandered into this valley of concentrated desertland, and a series of tragedies that had dogged their footsteps gave birth to the name.

Since that time Death Valley has been the scene of many mining booms. With the cry of "Gold", men stampeded to the region to pit their strength against nature, to wrest riches from the forbidding mountains. A fortunate few were successful; many more failed, but left their record in the elongated mounds of rocks with crude headboards that mark the final resting places of these unfortunates. With the discovery of borax deposits, the taming of Death Valley really began. Wheel tracks became common, and later a railroad crawled to the very edge of the Valley.

On February 11, 1933, a Presidential Proclamation created Death Valley National Monument, the boundaries of which embrace approximately 2,500 square miles. Since that time the National Park Service has constructed and improved hundreds of miles of road, and developed water supplies. These improvements have served to take most of the sting out of Death Valley. No longer does the name conjure up pictures of death and suffering, but rather scenes of colorful mountains, weird canyons and rippled sands, all made easily accessible.

Death Valley is noted for its low altitude and high temperatures. Over 400 square miles of the Valley lie below sea level, sinking to Bad Water, 279.8 feet below the level of the sea. Yet, the monument boundaries include several peaks of over 10,000 feet, with Telescope Peak in the Panamints rising to a height of 11,045 feet above sea level.

During summer months temperatures run high, and the relative humidity is almost non-existent. Extreme temperatures of 130 degrees and over usually are of short duration, but regardless of the many improvements made in the Valley, summer travel off the main patrolled highway will always be dangerous to the careless and unprepared. During the winter season, the temperate climate and extreme dryness of the atmosphere make Death Valley a delightful playground and health resort.

### What to See in Death Valley

Because of its wide vistas and spectacular mountains, visitors to Death Valley may see much of the region in a short length of time, if necessary. But those fortunate to have unlimited time may spend week upon week in explorations of absorbing interest into the out-of-the-way canyons and following the trails of the pioneers.

Space does not permit outline and description of all the trips in and around the Valley, but the following are the more popular tours, all easily accessible over good roads:

**DANTES VIEW**--Approximately 56 miles round trip from Furnace Creek, requiring about 3½ hours. This tour should be made in the morning in order to take advantage of the light conditions. Returning by way of RYAN, an abandoned borax mine, a trip through the mines on the "Baby Gauge" miniature railroad affords a pleasant diversion. A side trip through TWENTY MULE TEAM and CORK-SCREW CANYONS, is also offered on the return route, as well as the view at ZABRISKIE POINT.



RAINBOW TOUR--Approximately 49 miles round trip from Furnace Creek, requiring about 2½ hours. This tour is best in late afternoon, and affords views of the most colorful section of the Valley. It includes GOLDEN CANYON, MUSHROOM ROCK, VOLCANIC DRIVE, ARTISTS DRIVE, KALEIDOSCOPE VIEW, SALT POOLS, NATURAL BRIDGE, and BAD WATER, the latter 279 feet below sea level and the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere.

SOUTH LOOP--Approximately 90 miles round trip from Furnace Creek, requiring about 3 hours. This trip can be made in conjunction with the Rainbow Tour, by continuing southward to ASHFORD MILL from BAD WATER, thereby saving 17 miles. The trip offers a complete circle of the south half of the Valley floor, with many striking views enroute, including a view of COPPER CANYON, and GYPSUM HILL, a study in red and white. It also includes points of historical interest, such as BENNETTS WELL, where the first emigrant party spent several weeks in '49, and of the old EAGLE BORAX WORKS, the first borax plant in Death Valley.

GNOMES WORKSHOP--Approximately 11 miles round trip from Furnace Creek, requiring about 1 hour. This trip, though of short duration, is very interesting due to the variety of places visited. The FURNACE CREEK RANCH, with its all grass golf course and date gardens, the HARMONY BORAX WORKS, with skeleton buildings, where borax was once processed and hauled out of the Valley on great wagons drawn by 20 teams of mules, and MUSTARD CANYON, a short oddly colored canyon, ending at the GNOMES WORKSHOP, with its stream of salt brine, miniature waterfalls, and weird salt formations. From here it is only a short drive to the NURSERY in Cow Creek, where the National Park Service is collecting and raising desert plants. Many of the plants are peculiar to Death Valley alone.

TITUS CANYON, RHYOLITE, SCOTTY'S CASTLE, UBEHEBE CRATER--Approximately 150 miles round trip from Furnace Creek, requiring all day. This route leads first to the ghost town of RHYOLITE, famous as a boom town many years ago. TITUS CANYON, reached by a desert road that is rough but passable, is spectacular, and well worth the time and trouble. Another ghost town, LEADFIELD, is passed just before entering TITUS CANYON. It is well to remember that this phase of the trip must be made from the Nevada side, as the Canyon is a one-way road. SCOTTY'S CASTLE, the man-made wonder in GRAPEVINE CANYON is reached by turning north after leaving TITUS. UBEHEBE CRATER, a short distance north from the turn-off into GRAPEVINE, represents the most recent volcanic activity in Death Valley.

PANAMINT TOUR--Approximately 150 miles round trip from Furnace Creek, requiring all day. This trip includes such scenic canyons as GROTTTO and MOSAIC, and the abandoned mining towns of SKIDOO and HARRISBURG. The road climbs out onto the crest of the Panamint Range at AGUERREBERRY POINT, from which one gets a magnificent view of the Valley to the east, and a panorama of the Sierra Nevada mountains to the west. WILDROSE CANYON is followed to its head, passing the picturesque charcoal kilns and ending at MAHOGANY FLAT, from which point an excellent trail leads to the summit of TELESCOPE PEAK, a hike of 7 miles each way. From the peak, 11,045 feet above sea level, the view stretches endlessly in all directions.

More detailed information on these trips and on trips in and near the Valley may be obtained from National Park Service representatives in Death Valley.

#### Accommodations

Accommodations are available during the winter season, from October 1 to May 1. Both hotel and cabin type accommodations can be had in and near the Valley. Public campgrounds are available at Furnace Creek, Bennetts Well, and Mesquite Spring, but due to the fact that Death Valley is almost a woodless country, it is better to make provision for oil or gas stove, or for campfire wood, before entering the Valley.



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