



A summer visit, which is not advisable, offers Mars-like landscapes with 100-plus temperatures that can kill in minutes. Autumn and winter visits offer stunning experiences with both flora and fauna against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains. Those contrasts make it one of the most beautiful National Parks in the U.S.

Its close proximity to both Los Angeles and Las Vegas makes it a convenient visit to the southwestern United States. There are almost endless opportunities for hiking, biking, camping, photography, exploring and other activities. There are small commercial airports near Death Valley, but no major airlines service them. Driving from Southern California, take the 14 Freeway and U.S. 395, then State Route 178, which enters the park.

The main highway that travels through the park is California 190. Driving the 300 miles from Los Angeles takes about six hours. The Park is also just 135 miles west of Las Vegas, where there are many day tours available. Cost for a 10-hour trip from, visit and return to Las Vegas is about \$300 per person, and includes lunch and bottled water.

Death Valley is on the borders of western California and eastern Nevada, a three-million-acre land of many contrasts. It contains the lowest, driest, and hottest spots in the U.S. at Badwater Basin, 282 feet below sea level. Summer temperatures at its Furnace Creek area has often topped 130 degrees. The park also includes 2-mile-high Telescope Peak, where freezing winter weather often brings heavy mountaintop snow.

With nearly a million visitors annually, Death Valley is a very popular destination. A favorite place to overnight for RVs and trailers is the Furnace Creek Campground. It requires pre-booked reservations. Weekly entry fees are \$25 per vehicle, \$15 for individuals, and \$50 for an annual pass.

The cost for a parking spot and electric hook-up is \$25 per night. There are only basic toilet and laundry facilities at the campground. For another \$10 daily each, visitors enjoy showers and swimming pool privileges.

Rainfall is less than two inches a year, usually in springtime. The desert then is covered with golden primrose, phacelia, and sand verbena. There are many hiking trails in the Furnace Creek area, and park rangers at the visitor center are available for information, suggested routes and escort schedules.