

# A Visitors Guide To **Death Valley**

11<sup>th</sup> Edition



**Death Valley**  
Chamber of Commerce



*The Other Side of California*  
DEATH VALLEY AND THE EASTERN SIERRA

**Websites:**

Armargosa Conservancy, Shoshone,  
[www.armargosaconservancy.org](http://www.armargosaconservancy.org)

Death Valley Chamber of Commerce,  
[www.deathvalleychamber.org](http://www.deathvalleychamber.org)

Death Valley National Park,  
[www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva)

Shoshone Village, Shoshone,  
[www.shoshonevillage.com](http://www.shoshonevillage.com)

Stovepipe Wells Village,  
[www.stovepipewells.com](http://www.stovepipewells.com)

Panamint Springs Resort,  
[www.panamintsprings.com](http://www.panamintsprings.com)

Death Valley Natural History Association,  
[www.dvnha.org](http://www.dvnha.org)

Death Valley Conservancy,  
[www.dvconservancy.org](http://www.dvconservancy.org)



*The Other Side of California*  
DEATH VALLEY AND THE EASTERN SIERRA

*The 2018 Death Valley Visitor Guide is produced by the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce, the Death Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the County of Inyo. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce, the Death Valley Chamber of Commerce, Death Valley National Park, or the County of Inyo. (Except for our view that Death Valley is a spectacular place to visit. We will all definitely own that one.)*



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# STUNNING SIGHTS AND SCENES IN DEATH VALLEY

Death Valley contains millions of acres of wild and scenic land. Tucked into that sprawling landscape are more than a few truly stunning sights, as outlined below.

## Badwater Basin

Badwater is the site of the lowest place on land in North America, at 282 feet

below sea level. The scene is much more than an elevation marker. Seeps create small pools of water that dramatically reflect the nearby black mountains.

Telescope Peak, the highest point in Death Valley looms majestically, 11,000 feet above and across the valley. Located 17 miles

south of Furnace Creek.

## Dantes View

Located at an elevation of 5,758 feet directly above the Badwater Basin is Dante's View. This extremely scenic view spot provides vistas of almost all of Death Valley. One can look straight down to the Badwater Basin and directly across to the Panamint Mountains and Telescope Peak. Far off to the west, are seen the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and to the east, numerous desert mountain ranges of Nevada. Located 25 miles east and south of Furnace Creek. The last few miles of roadway are steep and narrow.

## Zabriskie Point

This viewpoint is accessed by a short drive and a steep short walk on a paved trail. The scene overlooks the beautifully eroded and colorful hills referred to as the badlands. Telescope

Peak can be seen in the distance as well as the soaring peaks of the Funeral Range. Zabriskie Point is a favorite of photographers, providing perfect opportunities at sunrise and sunset. Located 2 ½ miles east of Furnace Creek.

## Golden Canyon

Penetrating deep into Death Valley's Black Mountains is aptly named Golden Canyon. Especially in the morning light, the canyon walls glow magically with a flaxen hue. Golden Canyon is a hike, but one can get an intimate feel for it by walking just a few feet past its mouth. More adventurous trekkers can choose among a number of longer hikes. Located two miles south of Furnace Creek.



The sprawling Mesquite Sand Dunes, just outside of Stovepipe Wells Village.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## Western Gateway to Death Valley National Park

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# DEATH VALLEY SCENES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

## Salt Creek

One of the few places on the actual floor of Death Valley where water flows, Salt Creek meanders along the surface on and off for several miles. This unique environment also provides habitat for Death Valley's only native species of fish, the Desert Pupfish. Visitors can follow a wooden boardwalk along the banks of this desert treasure on a self-guided half mile nature walk. Located 13 ½ miles north of Furnace Creek, then a one mile graded dirt road.

## Mesquite Sand Dunes

Just a few miles west of Stovepipe Wells Village lies one of Death Valley's most popular attractions, the Mesquite Sand Dunes. Covering over 14 square miles, the dunes provide some of the most dramatic scenery in the park. Sunrise and sunset are both great times to catch just the right shot. Watch for the signed turnout about 23 miles north and west of Furnace Creek.

## Ubehebe Crater

Most visitors are taken aback when they approach the yawning expanse of Ubehebe Crater for the first time. This "Maar" Volcano was created by a steam explosion as recent as only 300 years ago. 600' deep and over a half mile across,

visitors can take a steep path to the bottom (and back up), walk around its rim and simply stand at the edge of the parking area and take in the overwhelming scene. Located 57 miles north of Furnace Creek. The last five miles are on a narrow roadway.

## Wildrose Charcoal Kilns

The Death Valley area has a rich mining history. Silver, gold, borax and talc are just some of the minerals that have been mined here. The ten Wildrose Charcoal Kilns are located at 7000 feet high up in the Panamint Mountains in a Pinion Pine Forest. These nearly perfect pieces of architecture were built in 1877 to produce charcoal for nearby silver smelters. About 62 miles from Furnace Creek, the last three miles on a graded dirt road.

## Artist Drive

This scenic one-way, semi-loop paved road twists, winds, climbs and dips its way through some of the most colorful scenery in Death Valley. Highlight of the nine mile trip is the Artist Pallate, where hues of greens, purples, oranges, browns and yellows blend together in a kaleidoscope of color. Entrance to Artist Drive is located about 10 miles south of Furnace Creek.



**Golden Canyon lives up to its name. Shown is the hiking trail through the canyon and Manley Beacon.**

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO



**Badwater Basin is the lowest spot in North America, resting at 282 feet below sea level.**

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO

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# EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES AWAIT IN TECOPA AND SHOSHONE

By Robin Flinchum

**W**ith an inventive emphasis on combining creature comforts and immersive outdoor adventures, local entrepreneurs are turning the gateway communities of Tecopa

and Shoshone into arts and ecotourism destinations in their own right.

Extraordinary lodging opportunities abound here, from a livable art installation to an upscale motel at the edge of a hidden oasis, from tipis to tiny camping cabins, the emphasis is on bringing visitors into the natural world.

Cynthia Keinitz, proprietor of Cynthia's Safaris and Desert Lodging in Tecopa, says her passion is sharing the transformative effect of experiencing the desert's beauty up close. "I want to encourage people to let it work its magic on them," she says, and she puts in a great deal of creative effort behind the scenes to make sure her guests are comfortable while they explore.

Keinitz specializes in group adventures and personally tailors the stay to suit the needs of the group. Options for her visitors include guided hiking trips, off-road safaris in a fleet of side-by-side all-terrain vehicles kept on the premises, star gazing with astronomers and rock walks with geologists. Full meals can be catered by Cynthia's using organic ingredients grown at the nearby Desert Bloom eco-farm, or guests can prepare their own meals in shared kitchens.

The lodging facilities include

remodeled trailers and tipis, with everything designed to emphasize the land itself, to lead the visitor outside, and to "have a tactile experience."

Also in Tecopa, tucked away on the edge of town where the scattered homes give way to the open sweep of the desert, is Villa Anita. Here an extraordinary collection of repurposed and recycled items, sculpted onto an old railroad tie cabin, take form as a livable art installation. Part art gallery, part museum, part educational retreat and bed and breakfast, Villa Anita "provides an artistic experience from which to really enjoy the isolation of the desert," says David Aaron Smith, resident artist and curatorial partner.

For the past six years the owners of Villa Anita, a community of artists and visionaries, have continually added to it so that the original cabin now only appears in glimpses. The structure is a living work of art, sometimes indoor and sometimes outdoor, wending through sheltered gardens, cozy sleeping rooms, and giant sculptures. Some areas are sheltered by billowy fabric panels or large paintings, others made of colorful bottle walls, an upended boat, repurposed trailers and a variety of bright and brilliant castoff pieces from closed-out hotels in Las Vegas.

Villa Anita, says Smith, is now incorporated as a nonprofit outdoor museum. In addition to inspiring artists and offering lodging, one of the biggest goals for the Villa's future is to encourage and even educate others in the art of building with recycled materials.

The Villa offers three bookable guest rooms, though Smith stresses that it is not a hotel. Villa Anita is a deeply personal desert experience.

Tecopa is also rich in hiking opportunities, most notably the Grimshaw Lake Natural Area and watchable wildlife site, and the Amargosa Canyon. Accessing the extraordinary desert vistas of the Amargosa



**The recently remodeled Shoshone Inn offers a touch of comfort in the desert.**

PHOTO BY ROBIN FLINCHUM



**Tecopa has four hot springs resorts offering a variety of rejuvenating experiences.**



**Cynthia's Safaris helps visitors explore the desert.**

PHOTO COURTESY CYNTHIA'S SAFARIS

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# TECOPA AND SHOSHONE EXPERIENCES

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Canyon is easy now that an official trail head, with picnic ramadas and a pit toilet, exists at the edge of the parking lot of the China Ranch Date Farm. Stop here to see a working farm in a desert oasis, stock up on local dates and a trail guide at the gift shop and head out to see if you can catch a glimpse of the elusive Wild and Scenic Amargosa River.

In Shoshone Susan Sorrells, whose parents and grandparents stewarded this land before her, has created an ethereal refuge in the desert where both wildlife and humanity can find shelter, sustenance and thoughtful coexistence. In recent years Sorrells, in partnership with state and local conservation organizations, has created a small riparian habitat lake and cultivated a thriving population of Shoshone pupfish in the natural warm spring that is the lifeblood of the town. The pupfish are now the star attraction in a small natural area with a walking trail leading to a semi-shaded pond ideal for picnicking or an afternoon's quiet contemplation.

The recently remodeled Shoshone Inn offers 17 upscale rooms, as well as a vintage trailer called Dutch's Retreat and a roomy cabin called the Black Rock. The Shoshone RV Park also offers tent camping and all guests in Shoshone have access to the town's delightful warm springs swimming pool.

The town of Shoshone keeps a naturalist on staff, maintains self-guided and well-marked bird watching trails and plans to offer off-road eco-tours in the 2018/2019 season. Meals

can be had all day and evening at the Crowbar Café and saloon, offering traditional diner and Tex-Mex fare.

In the heart of Tecopa, four local businesses carry on the tradition that first brought visitors here — seeking relief and rejuvenation by immersing themselves in the natural hot mineral spring water.

The Tecopa Hot Springs Campground offers tent camping, RV spaces and two charming little cabins with comfortable beds and air conditioning. This is also the location of the Tecopa Trading Post, offering an eclectic mix of camping food essentials, artwork and souvenirs.

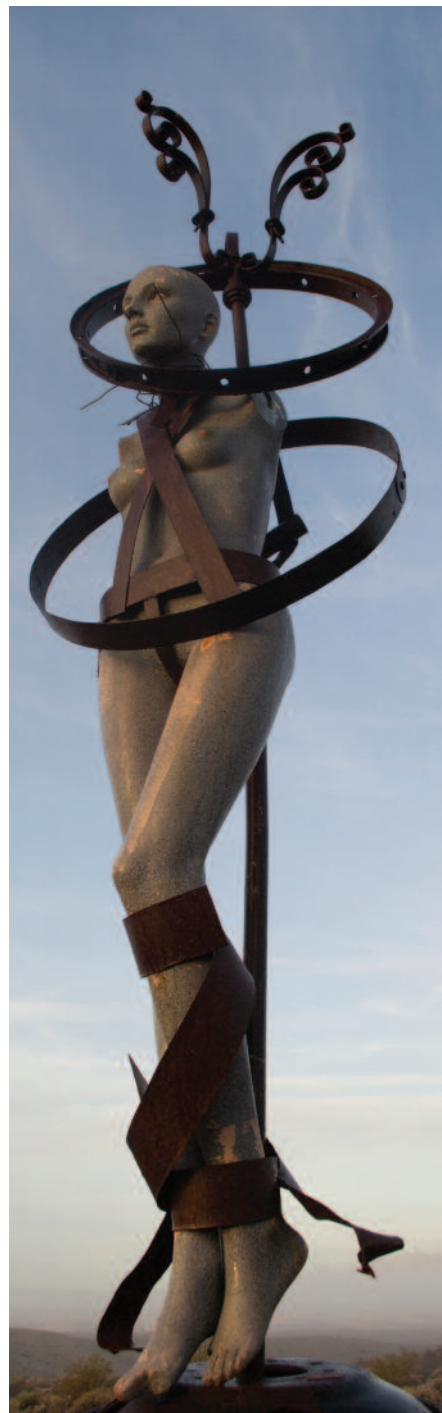
The Tecopa Hot Springs Resort offers 16 motel rooms, four cabins with kitchenettes, tent camping and RV spaces. The Resort is home to the Tecopa Basin Artists Group Gallery, with a new art exhibit every 4 to 6 weeks. The Gallery often hosts art workshops and music events on an open air stage. Here you'll find the Tecopa Bistro restaurant, which offers an excellent breakfast.

Delight's Hot Springs, one of the oldest hot springs resorts in Tecopa, offers six small adobe cottages, three studio rooms, private pools, an RV park and an on-site BBQ restaurant and brew pub.

The Tecopa Palms RV Park offers RV spaces, private pools and a spacious and busy club house where guests meet for socializing and activities such as quilting, crafts, and a social hour in the evening.

**Visitors to Villa Anita get a unique, immersive desert art experience.**

PHOTO COURTESY VILLA ANITA



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**Two, huge Borax 20-Mule Team Wagons and trailing water tank at the new wagon barn at the Laws Railroad Museum.**



## **AFTER A ROUNDABOUT TRIP, THE BORAX WAGONS ARE HOME AT LAWS**

**T**he instantly recognizable Borax 20-Mule Team Wagons took a bit of a roundabout route to their new home in an impressive, brand new barn at the Laws Railroad Museum and Historic Village.

The first leg of that journey involved nearly a decade of research and work and fundraising that eventually resulted in the construction of the huge, historically accurate wagons and the gear needed to hitch 20 mules to the two big freight wagons and the water tank rolling behind them.

Once the wagons were ready to roll in 2016, they were re-introduced to the public by rolling down some pretty impressive boulevards. First came the Pasadena Rose Parade, a California New Year's Day tradition known around the world. Then the wagons and mules ventured through Washington, D.C. to help celebrate Independence Day on the National Mall in the nation's capital.

While those parades have their fans and carry a tad of prestige in the world's eyes, in the Eastern Sierra the crowning achievement of the 20-Mule Team Borax Wagons came when the whole outfit starred as one of the crowd favorites during several trips down Bishop's Main Street during the annual Mule Days Parade.

The local pride came from two

sources. First was the familiar face of longtime Eastern Sierra packer and teamster Bobby Tanner who helped bring the wagons back to life and personally maneuvers the huge wagons pulled by 20 mules, working two abreast, down the parade route. Second, the 20-Mule Team and Borax are both local products and local legends that contributed mightily to the notoriety and ongoing mystique of the Death Valley region, Inyo County's premiere tourist attraction.

Finally, after dazzling yet another Mule Days crowd this year, the wagons headed for their new permanent home. On Memorial Day, May 28, a crowd of about 100 came to Laws to help dedicate the new Borax 20-Mule Team Wagon Barn.

The big wagons were in the barn and, even without a cadre of mules, dazzled the crowd. The big back wheels are 7-feet high. The wagon box towers above the big wheels. The wagons are made of a beautiful, lightly stained wood. In contrast, dozens of black bolts dot the wagon boxes in a testament to the authentic wagon-building trades that created the rolling historical replicas. The barn itself is first-class. The skylights in the roof send splashes of sunshine on the wagons. Long, white walls await additional photos and explanatory text. Those final touches

will be added as time goes on, thanks to a collaboration between Laws and the Bishop-based American Mule Museum.

Besides those two local groups, the non-profit Death Valley Conservancy and Rio Tinto Borates (formerly Pacific Coast Borax), also played critical roles in bringing the 20-Mule Team back home to Inyo County.

Tanner addressed the crowd and recalled how, about 10 years ago, he contacted Howard Holland, the talented exhibit designer and board member of Laws Museum, with what Tanner called "a scheme" to build replica borax wagons. And now, after years of work and even more "scheming," the wagons and their new home at Laws are a reality.

While touring the country with the wagons, Tanner said the real "eye opener" was that so many people, whether in Kansas, Ohio or Maryland, recognized the 20 mule team and wagons. Especially those from farm families or those who were familiar with mules, "knew exactly what they were looking at" when they approached the huge wagons. Part of the reason for the wagons' notoriety, he added, came from "Ron Reagan" who hosted the TV show "Death Valley Days," sponsored by Borax and featuring the wagons. Of

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# BORAX WAGONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

course, “Ron” is also known as the former governor of California, president of the United States and, more importantly, one-time Grand Marshall of the Mule Days Parade.

While the 20-mule team can seem like “a local thing,” Tanner assured the crowd that “this is a significant deal,” and the Borax wagons and the 20-mule team is still “an American icon.”

Tanner then recalled how one man had an out-sized impact on the wagon project. In 1999, Rose Parade officials contacted Borax and asked if the company could bring the famed wagons and mules to the parade. The company had marketed “20-Mule Team Borax” from 1906 to 1950. But most company officers did not want to revive the wagons.

But one corporate officer turned that thinking around and started the process to bring the wagons back, Tanner said as a way to introduce

Preston Chiaro. He was managing the Boron mine at the time, and knew the Eastern Sierra. More important, he knew the Tanner family as the packers at Red’s Meadow.

He got the wagon idea turned around in the corporate offices. Then he was able to see the project through to completion since he eventually became president of US Borax, which was owned by Rio Tinto at the time – the most recent name for the Borax Company, which was known as Pacific Coast Borax when it built the first borax wagons to haul the mineral out of its Death Valley mines.

“These wagons have a real power,” Chiaro told the crowd. “It’s the power of an idea, and that idea is the development of the West.”

Chiaro noted that Rio Tinto put up a \$150,000 challenge grant that made the fabrication of the wagons possible, along with the outpouring of support and donations from individuals and

organizations. Another, even tougher obstacle was who could manage the mules and wagons. “Driving a 20-mule team was a lost art,” he said. Enter Bobby Tanner and his crew. Then came years of painstaking research followed by exacting construction and fabrication using 19th and early 20th century wagon-building skills and “technology.”

Once completed and rolling, Chiaro noted that a special aspect of the sight of the wagons in action is that “there is a beauty about it,” as 20 mules work in unison and respond to the commands of the teamsters. After watching the mules and wagons perform in parades large and small, Chiaro said it is easy to see the “magic” created by the imposing, vintage vehicles. “It sparks peoples’ imagination.”

And now, people can visit the wagons in their new, home barn at Laws, and let their imagination run wild.



**Bobby Tanner and his crew bring Borax 20-Mule Team Wagons down the Mule Days Parade Route in 2017.**



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# FAST FUN FACTS ABOUT DEATH VALLEY

Inyo County is home to the highest point in the contiguous 48 states, Mt. Whitney, at 14, 508 feet above sea level, and the lowest spot in the western hemisphere, Badwater, at 282 feet below sea level.

The largest escarpment in the U.S. rises from the floor of Death Valley to the top of Telescope Peak in the Panamint Range.

The first European to enter Inyo County is believed to have been Antonio Armijo who in the spring of 1830 tread the "Old Spanish Trail" between Santa Fe, NM and Spanish settlements in California.

Death Valley also possesses a long list of lesser known weather extreme and records. The greatest number of consecutive days with a maximum temperature of 100 °F or above was 154 days in the summer of 2001. The summer of 1996 had 40 days over 120 °F and 105 days over 110 °F. The summer of 1917 had 52 days where the temperature reached 120 °F. On July 12, 2012, the day's low temperature was 107 °F tying the record for the world's hottest low temperature ever recorded. On the same day, the average temperature was 117.5 °F, which is the world's hottest temperature averaged over 24 hours on record.

In July of 1913, Death Valley was in the midst of a particularly brutal heat wave. On July 10, Furnace Creek Ranch foreman Oscar Denton recorded an air temperature of 134°F, which today, is still considered the hottest temperature ever recorded and a world record.

Death Valley National Park, in Inyo County, is the largest national park in the lower 48 at 3.3 million acres. Inyo County has the lowest census-designated area in the U.S., Furnace Creek which is 179 feet below sea level.

Legendary frontiersmen, John C. Frémont and Kit Carson passed through Inyo County on the Old Spanish Trail.

The lowest golf course in the nation is located in Inyo County. The Furnace Creek Golf Course is 214 ft below sea level.

Death Valley is 5,268 square miles making it larger than three US states and 33 countries! Its dimensions roughly equate to Santa Clarita to the Mexican border in length and from Santa Monica to Riverside, California in width. And with 91% of the Park designated as wilderness, a visitor to Death Valley is almost assured of a wild and uncrowded experience.

A castle built based on lies between friends is located in Death Valley. Death Valley got its name after a child, in an ill-fated party of settlers, died. The settlers escaped a grim fate and as they left the valley, one turned and said, "Good bye, Death Valley," so naming it.

Death Valley prospector and businessman, Dad Fairbanks, founded Shoshone and is credited with having rescued 50 people from Death Valley.

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# A BIG RESTAURANT RENAISSANCE IN TINY TECOPA

By Robin Flinchum

A surprising restaurant renaissance is putting the tiny town of Tecopa on the epicurean map. Where once there was not a bite to be had if you didn't bring it with you, four independent eating and drinking establishments are now open for business in the cool weather season.

The offerings include a lot of farm-to-table organic produce, traditional comfort foods, gluten free and vegan options, artisan beer, secret family recipes and a surprising wealth of knowledge and experience among the chefs, brewers and restaurateurs.

In 2017 the Tecopa Brewing Company became the second microbrewery in town when it opened in an existing BBQ restaurant on the grounds of Delight's Hot Springs Resort. Now it takes its place in Tecopa's hospitality lineup beside the Death Valley Brewing Company (the town's original microbrewery), a gourmet steakhouse called Steaks and Beer, and down-home Southern cooking at the Tecopa Bistro.

## Tecopa Bistro

The Bistro is a joint venture, owned by Paul Barnes and Ryan Thomas of the Tecopa Hot Springs Campground and housed at the Tecopa Hot Springs Resort. The Bistro is run by Ed and Sharon Thomas, transplants from outside Baltimore, Maryland.

The Thomases came to Tecopa in 2016 when Ed was experiencing health issues, he said, and to be near their son Ryan. They found a home at the newly renovated Bistro, cooking up an eclectic menu ranging from American comfort food to exotic Mediterranean

fare.

The Tecopa Bistro kitchen is where the "Old South meets the Wild West," Thomas said. Selections include his specialty gumbo and smothered pork chops, as well as novelty items like rattlesnake pizza and a scorpion parfait.

The Bistro's wide range of vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options, including a lavish slice of rich gluten free carrot cake, makes it unique on the Tecopa scene. Thomas said he's adding more vegan and vegetarian menu

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A Las Vegas chef runs Steaks and Beer with attention to detail and quality.

PHOTO BY ROBIN FLINCHUM



The Tecopa Bistro, where "The Old South Meets the Wild West." Gumbo and rattlesnake pizza? You bet.

PHOTO BY ROBIN FLINCHUM



# TINY TECOPA RESTAURANT RENAISSANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

options by popular request for the 2018/2019 season.

The Bistro also serves a Firehouse Burger and Firehouse Fries. The proceeds from these sales are donated to the local fire department.

## Steaks and Beer

Former Las Vegas chef Eric Scott has been cooking in Tecopa since 2015 and opened his own steak house in a little railroad tie cabin on the Old Spanish Trail Highway in 2016. Scott decided to get right to the point in naming his restaurant and called it simply Steaks and Beer, although the menu does include some vegetarian pasta and salad options, Scott said.

The menu is limited but everything on it is crafted with careful attention to detail and infused with Scott's 20-plus years of experience cooking is some of the most high-pressure restaurants on the Strip. He learned French cuisine at the 4-diamond Andre's French Restaurant, and is trained in Italian cuisine as well. Scott is passionate about selecting high-quality ingredients, he said, using organic and farm-to-table produce and grass fed beef when he can get them.

The indoor part of Steaks and Beer is tiny, with only two tables, but it opens into plenty of outdoor seating, including an unusual patio suspended over a fish pond. As the name implies, Scott serves a variety of beers, including local brews.

In Tecopa, Scott said he found freedom from the constraints of corporate cooking. Here, he said, he can actually meet the people he feeds, truly relax on his days off, and cook his menu his way.

## Tecopa Brewing Company and BBQ Restaurant

Westley McNeal first arrived in Tecopa when he was 17. "There was never anywhere to eat here for the longest time," McNeal, now 36, remembers.

These days McNeal and his wife Courtney McNeal, often with their



The Tecopa Brewing Company is a family operation featuring BBQ and locally crafted beer.

PHOTO BY ROBIN FLINCHUM

toddler daughter in tow, are running a BBQ restaurant and their own craft brew pub called the Tecopa Brewing Company at the entrance to Delight's Hot Springs Resort. "It's a family business," McNeal says, "we all pull together."

McNeal says he gained experience for running the restaurant by making home brews and experimenting with the original family recipes for the BBQ sauces and rubs they use at the restaurant. The lunch and dinner menus offer traditional BBQ fare.

The pub brews its beers on site and offers two stouts, two India pale ales, and a California red ale. The Brewing Company's best known beer is its War Eagle pale ale, which is now also available on tap at the Crowbar in the nearby town of Shoshone.

## Death Valley Brewing Company

Jon Zellhoefer estimates that the Death Valley Brewing Company has produced over 140 different craft beers since it opened in 2014. He always keeps a pale ale and coffee stout on the menu, he says, but he likes to experiment and is always changing things up.

Zellhoefer's father owned the area known as "downtown Tecopa," where the Old Spanish Trail Highway meets the Tecopa Hot Springs Road, back when the mines were going full-time here and the town had a robust

population. In those days the property housed a somewhat infamous saloon called the Snakepit. That closed down in 1996, Zellhoefer said, and remained vacant for many years.

After remodeling a small building on the property (which now houses Steaks and Beer) he and his wife Cheryl Zellhoefer opened the Death Valley Brewing Company in 2014, selling artisan beers brewed on site. They have since moved into the bigger building next door, using both an old restaurant and the old Snakepit for their regular pub and special events.

Death Valley Brewing Company also serves homemade root beer and occasionally hosts guest food vendors with offerings such as home made tamales.

For each of the proprietors, the restaurant renaissance began when they were drawn to this quiet corner of the desert, small enough to be peaceful, big enough to allow creative freedom in the kitchen and at the brewing stations.

In Tecopa, said most of these entrepreneurs, they could escape the pretension and hustle of the city, work alongside family and friends, and feed hungry travelers and happy locals. What could be better than that?

NOTE: All of the Tecopa restaurants close in the hot summer months. Most are open October through May on weekends and select weekdays.

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## STARS PUT ON A SPECTACULAR SHOW EVERY NIGHT IN DEATH VALLEY



The bright night sky and the Milky Way shine above the Harmony Borax Works.  
PHOTO BY WESTON KESSLER

Death Valley National Park harbors some of the darkest night skies in the United States. That dark sky is key to its certification as the third International Dark Sky Park in the U.S. National Park System.

“Death Valley is a place to gaze in awe at the expanse of the Milky Way, follow a lunar eclipse, track a meteor shower, or simply reflect on your place in the universe,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis when the certification was announced in 2013. “We greatly appreciate the International Dark-Sky Association certification. It illustrates the park’s commitment to protect natural darkness and supports the wider mission to protect nightscapes in the entire National Park System.”

“As the world becomes more urbanized,” Jarvis added, “the value of a starry sky only increases and our ability to offer visitors these incredible experiences is an integral part of the National Park Service mission to preserve our nation’s most cherished places for this and future generations.”

Death Valley’s natural darkness, along with National Park Service actions to reduce excessive outdoor lighting, led the International Dark-Sky Association to designate the park as the third and largest International Dark Sky Park.

“The Dark Sky Park designation represents not only the efforts of the park and its partners, but the dedication of avid amateur astronomers who have sought the park’s world-class starry skies for decades,” said Dan Duriscoe, of the National Park Service’s Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division.

To qualify for the dark sky designation, the park improved external lighting at facilities in the Furnace Creek and Stovepipe Wells areas, reducing energy consumption, sky glow, and glare. The designation requires the park to sustain its efforts to protect night sky resources and visitor education. Implementation of the park’s lighting guidelines will improve the natural character of the night and leave the stars untarnished in other areas of the park.

“At Death Valley the sky literally begins at your feet,” said Tyler Nordgren, Associate Professor of Physics at the University of Redlands (Calif.) and International Dark-Sky Association board member. “When my students and I look up at night from our southern California campus, we can usually count 12 stars in the sky. However, less than a five hour drive from Los Angeles there’s a place where anyone can look up and see the universe the way everyone could 100 years ago.”



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# ENJOY THE HEAT

Death Valley is the hottest place on Earth. In the summer months (May-September) temperatures average over 100°F (38°C), and often exceed 120°F (49°C). The world's hottest temperature, 134 °F was recorded here in 1913.

Death Valley National Park, however, is perfectly safe to visit in the summer with some caution.

**Drink and carry plenty of water:** Carry with you and drink at least one gallon (4 liters) of water per day to replace loss from sweat, and drink more if you are active. Fluid and electrolyte levels must be balanced, so have salty foods or sports drinks too.

**Travel prepared to survive:** Stay on paved roads in summer. If your car breaks down, stay with it until help comes. Carry extra drinking water in your car in case of emergency.

**Watch for signs of trouble:** If you feel dizzy, nauseous, or get a headache, get out of the sun immediately and drink water or sports drinks. Dampen



**The temperature sign at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center confirms that “it’s hot in Death Valley.”** DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO

clothing to lower body temperature. Be alert for symptoms in others. Heat illness can be severe and even deadly.

Most visitors in the summer choose

mostly to tour by car. The main points remain open, but it is highly recommended to stay on paved roads and close to your vehicle.



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# THE RACETRACK PLAYA AND THE 'MAGIC' MOVING ROCKS

Famed naturalist John Muir once said, "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul." Nature has many such temples. A place where one may visit and feel the power of the natural scene fill them with strength and renewed enthusiasm for life. Where the magic of the setting brings forth the very best in us all.

Death Valley National Park is a land of extremes, oddities and mystery. Tucked away in a remote corner of this expansive wilderness lies a very special place. A place of great beauty, of great mystery and of much magic.

The Racetrack Playa lies at an elevation of 3,608 feet. The Playa is a dry lake bed, about 3 miles long and 1 1/2 miles wide. The surreal setting is

stunning. The exceptionally flat playa glistens creamy white in the desert sun, and is surrounded by dark, brooding and barren mountains. About 1/3 of the way down the playa, a small island of dark rock thrusts dozens of feet into the desert sky.

Walking on the Playa is an experience in itself. The vastness of this landscape becomes intensified the further you walk onto this old dry lake bed. As you travel toward the southwest corner, you begin to notice the Playa has become littered with dozens of rocks. And the unusual thing about these rocks is that many of them have a distinct trail furrowed into the playa surface trailing from the rock as if to indicate the direction from which the rocks have come from. Some of these trails are straight, most are zig-

zagged, many are curved and some even make 360 degree loops.

These are the famous Moving Rocks of the Racetrack Playa. The Rocks have been studied by scientists for decades. No one knows for sure exactly how these rocks "move" though there is a most widely accepted (but not the only) theory.

During winter rains, enough water may fall to form a shallow lake over the playa. As the water begins to evaporate, a thin layer of soft slick mud will form on the playa surface. At this high of an elevation, freezing nights and even days are not uncommon during the winter months, freezing the slippery slick mud. Like many desert basins, the winds blow often...and often they blow with exceptional velocity. Strong winds will literally push the rocks across the partially frozen and slippery mud playa. As the winds change directions, so does the course of the rocks.

The power of the scene will bring the most jaded urban dweller to their knees in this holiest of nature's temples. The stark and vast beauty combines perfectly with nature's "magic" of the moving rocks.

The Playa is located 27 miles north of Ubehebe Crater on a fair dirt road. Depending on recent weather, the road can be quite rough and is not recommended for ordinary passenger cars. Check with the Rangers for current road conditions before heading out. Be considerate of others and do not walk on the play if it has rained recently. Footprints will be left in the soft mud that will last until the next big rain. Walk onto the play only during dry conditions.



This rock leaves its trail across the Racetrack Playa.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO.

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# RENOVATIONS BRING NEW LIFE AND ENERGY TO A HISTORIC RESORT

The Oasis at Death Valley, formerly known as Furnace Creek Resort, is North America's only authentic desert oasis. One of Death Valley's best-kept secrets is being completely reinvigorated by a well-deserved multi-million dollar restoration and renovation bringing new life and energy to this historic property.

Rebecca Stone and Chris Vandall of Denver's OZ Architecture immediately understood just what a unique project they were embarking on as soon as they arrived.

"Coming through this arid, desert moonscape, there's nothing out there," says Stone, the architect of record and principal in charge on the project. "And then you round the corner and you hit this beautiful, hand-built inn that's truly an oasis. There are palm trees and water and a beautifully crafted building that grows out of the rock. You don't expect that after you've been driving for miles without seeing any trees at all."

All facets of the resort are receiving an update with the classic gem of the park, The four-diamond Inn at Death Valley, being adorned with a complete interior re-design featuring a new lobby, bar, and dining room, and enhanced landscaping, yet retaining its classic mission California-style. The Inn's make-over also includes refurbishments to all guest rooms, and 22 new casitas are being added around the famed gardens. The vintage pool, with its signature stonework, will add cabanas and a new spa, as well as a new pool bar.

Located in the shadow of the Oasis Gardens' date palms, the Inn's Casitas (due to be completed in the fall of 2018) will offer unparalleled privacy and luxury within easy walking distance of the Inn pool. In addition to the main sleeping quarters, each Casita also has a living room with a sleeper sofa as well as a wet bar – perfect for fixing your cocktail of choice while you hear the wind rustle through the palms overhead.

The Ranch at Death Valley is having a completely new Town Square erected, replacing the former resort center. The new heart of The Ranch will be constructed in a complementary mission California style to its sister hotel, The Inn. The Town Square will include a new guest registration area, a new restaurant, retail shopping area and The Last Kind Words Saloon – the

Ranch's new signature entertainment space.

"The ranch was very different," says Stone. "It's sort of national park in feel but also this homestead kind of place. It feels a little more like a dude ranch. I like that aspect of the ranch because you're expecting to arrive at a national park but then there's also this cool little saloon and steakhouse and cabins and motorcyclists hanging out on the front porch. It's very welcoming. Not frilly or fancy."

The Furnace Creek Golf Course at

Death Valley, the lowest elevation golf course in the world, has also been updated and offers golfers the opportunity to challenge themselves while playing their "lowest" round of golf – guaranteed. The course has added more desert landscaping and new contours to make the course more water efficient. The 19th hole continues to serve patrons via its unique golf cart drive-thru, which is a must-do for every guest, as is their world-famous hamburger.



An artist's rendering of the completely new common area at Ranch at Death Valley. The Ranch's 224 rooms have been upgraded and refreshed.

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# HOW 'WHITE GOLD' LED TO NAMING TWENTY MULE TEAM CANYON

In the fall of 1926, the Pacific Coast Borax Company (Borax Company) was nearing completion of its first hotel in Death Valley, the Furnace Creek Inn. At this time, Death Valley enjoyed no protective status as a National Monument or National Park. In fact, the very few roads that existed in the Death Valley region had all been built as part of the Borax Company's mining operations.

Long-time Borax Company employee and Land Superintendent Harry Gower had been assigned the task of overseeing construction of the new hotel. The details involved in its construction along with the horrific construction schedule demanded by the Borax Company executives had consumed Harry and his staff. As the construction work was winding down and the opening of the hotel was just a few weeks away, it occurred to Harry that the arriving tourists would want to enjoy some scenic views and have some historic points to visit while staying at "the Inn."

Thus, the race was on it not only to

develop a few of these points of interest, but to name them as well.

The name Death Valley already conjured up an image among the American public of fear, morbidity and a land inhabited by reddish ghouls with pointed ears, tails and pitchforks. Harry and the Borax Company thought it a wise marketing strategy to continue with this association. Devils Golf Course, Funeral Mountains, Badwater and many more Dante/Inferno-type names soon appeared on maps as "must see" places for the Death Valley visitor.

But Harry Gower also understood the huge marketing potential if they could promote the use of its magic soap product Twenty Mule Team Borax through the appeal and romanticism of



**Instead of yet another Devil-related name, the scenic canyon behind the Furnace Creek Inn was named 20 Mule Team Canyon to link it with the Borax Company's famous, widely recognized soap products, even though Borax was not mined in the canyon, and the 20 Mule Teams never visited.**

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO

soon to be opened Death Valley. Names that would help the traveling public to easily associate with their "white gold" (which was readily available at the local grocers back home) were also chosen for some of the tourist sites.

Four miles east of the Furnace Creek Inn lay a twisting and colorful canyon just south of the main thoroughfare through Furnace Creek Wash. Harry (or perhaps someone on his staff) suggested naming this beautiful spot Twenty Mule Team Canyon. They didn't seem to mind that the famed Twenty Mule Teams never traveled through here. The canyon was so narrow and twisting in places, that a team of two horses would have difficulty navigating through parts of it. But all of the arriving tourists to the soon to open Inn would have to travel right past this spot, and see its sign. A more innocuous form of using nature to help market a product may have never been devised!

The short 2.5 mile drive through Twenty Mule Team Canyon provides visitors with beautiful and scenic vistas along with many hiking opportunities. Twisted, eroded and eerie formations abound. There are significant borax deposits found in the hills and mountains here, - though the Borax Company never actively mined this location it did carry out extensive development work to establish the value of their deposits. Hikers can explore the area but for their safety, should never enter any old mine.

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# DANTE'S VIEW: THE "JAW-DROPPING" VISTA DANTE'S VIEW

In the fall of 1926, the Borax Company was nearing completion of its new hotel, the Furnace Creek Inn in Death Valley. Knowing they would need scenic points of interest for their guests to visit when they arrived, hotel executives asked residents in nearby towns if they knew of a particular "jaw-dropping" viewpoint.

More specifically, the mining executives were looking for an accessible view point that would provide not only sweeping vistas of the Valley, but of far off Mt. Whitney as well. This would give tourists the thrill of seeing both the lowest and highest points in the contiguous United States from the same spot.

Businessmen in the gateway town of Beatty, Nevada tried to promote a nearby area known as Chloride Cliffs which they fittingly renamed "the Rim of Hell." They convinced Nevada governor James Sruham to fund the widening and improving of a road to the point through Nevada, and on into California as well! When the Borax Company and their railroad partners came out to take a look, they agreed that this might just be the view spot they were looking for.

But as the group was returning to Los Angeles, they stopped in the small town of Shoshone and asked long time local Charles Brown if he knew of a better spot. "I don't pay much attention to scenery," said Charles. "But I know one view that made me stop and look." When he took the party to it, they immediately agreed. Far below lie the shimmering salt flats of Badwater, at 282 feet below sea level, while in the far off distance glimmered the Sierra Crest just north of Mt Whitney. A road was quickly graded and a small six-

sided glass-in observatory was erected at the top.

The name of the viewpoint was said to have been inspired by Dante's description of Purgatory.

Today, a well-designed paved roads winds its way to the parking area at Dante's View. Located about a 30 minute drive from Furnace Creek, the views from the top are truly stunning and breathtaking. Not only can one see the two aforementioned spots, but a multitude of others as well. Telescope Peak, rising two miles about the great Valley's floor looms grandly to the west. The views up and down the Valley offer vistas so vast and "other worldly" that they were

used as a backdrop in the original Star Wars movie. To the east is majestic Mt. Charleston, home to the Las Vegas area's only ski resort. Straight down, cars crawl their way along the Park's road like ants.

The view from Dante's view is spectacular no matter what time of day you make it there. But should time allow, arriving in the early morning and watching the desert sky pass from inky black through indigo, deep purple, violet,

red, orange, yellow and on to bright white, is an experience one will never forget. And watching the sun go down and the lights go out on the great Valley at sunset is an experience that will rival that of sunrise.

There are short hikes that lead north and south of the parking area. There is no longer an observatory but primitive restrooms are located at a switchback about 1/4 mile before the top. Take a jacket, pack a snack or a meal, and spend some time at this magical Death Valley spot. You'll find the time you spend here very well worth it.



Dante's View overlooks Badwater Basin, the lowest elevation spot in North America.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PHOTO.



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# WHERE TO EXPLORE, RECREATE AND BE AMAZED IN DEATH VALLEY AND INYO COUNTY



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Inyo County is “The Other Side of California,” a vast expanse along the eastern edge of California that covers 10,000 square miles (16,000 sq. Km), an area greater than six U.S. states (VT, NH, NJ, CT, DL and RI).

Inyo County is a land of extremes. It claims the highest and lowest points in the 48-contiguous states, and the oldest

trees in the world. You’ll find hot and cold, wet and dry, barren and lush, refined and common at different times and in different parts of the county.

The two most distinct aspects of Inyo County are Death Valley and the Eastern Sierra. Within these destinations are such natural wonders as Death Valley National Park, the Ancient

Bristlecone Pine Forest, the Palisade Glacier, Mt. Whitney, Rock Creek Canyon, the High Sierra and a classic western landscape that has been seen in countless motion pictures. With six million acres (2.4 million hectares) of public land, Inyo County offers numerous opportunities to explore, recreate and be amazed.

## HERE IS A BRIEF RUNDOWN OF WHAT MAKES INYO COUNTY SO ALLURING:

### DEATH VALLEY

In 1849, a party of pioneers nearly perished while attempting to cross this desert valley. Upon being rescued, one turned and exclaimed, “Goodbye, Death Valley,” so naming it. Today, a million people say hello to Death Valley National Park, each year. The national park is the largest in the lower 48 states at 3.3 million acres (1.3 million hectares), and with the southeastern corner of Inyo County, comprises more than half the landmass of the county.

Death Valley attracts photographers, rock hounds, hikers and geologists to its fascinating and austere landscape.

Favorite sights include the nine-mile, looping Artist’s Drive with its many-colored rock formations. Popular trails pass through the Golden Canyon, Mosaic Canyon and Wildrose Peak trail. Each of these leads to amazing views and other-worldly formations. The Badwater Basin salt pan is the lowest point in North America — 282 ft/86 m — below sea level, and the highest point in the national park is Telescope Peak at 11,049 ft./3,315 m.

Death Valley has more than its share of intimidating places: the Funeral Mountains, Rhyolite Ghost Town, Badwater, Stovepipe Wells, Salt Creek and Furnace Creek, among them. Yet, despite these notorious-sounding names, several species of wildlife inhabit the park and it’s so popular that for much of the year (late fall to late spring) available rooms and campsites are far and few between.

Park lodging centers at the Oasis (formerly Furnace Creek Resort) whose

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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# THE ALLURE OF INYO COUNTY

famous Inn was opened in 1927 by the Pacific Coast Borax Company of 20 Mule Team fame. The Furnace Creek Inn was meant to save the company's failing railroad. As the value of mining faded, so did the railroad, but the Furnace Creek Inn thrived. It is today among the most highly sought and refined oasis to be found within the National Park System. Nearby The Ranch is a popular destination for families and RV campers. The park's visitor center is located here and the Borax Museum displays artifacts, Borax wagons and other historic equipment from the park's past.

Each season in Death Valley has its attraction. In winter, snowflakes tumble until they evaporate near the valley floor; near the end of winter, showy blooms of wildflowers appear; and in summer, temperatures often reach 120° F/49° C.

**Stovepipe Wells** – A motel, restaurant, pool, campground with RV sites and convenience store and gas station are located here. Old charcoal kilns and the ghost town of Leadfield are worth visiting.

**Panamint Springs** – They really mean it, when they say “Last Gas” at Panamint Springs at the national park's western boundary. You'll drive 30 miles before you find the next gas or water. Remember, you're in Death Valley! Continue east on CA-190 to cross Towne's Pass into Death Valley, south on CA-178 to Trona and west on CA-190 to Olancho and Lone Pine (CA-136).

**Shoshone** – This desert town to the southeast of the national park was once a railroad center and rest area for local miners. It still serves as a service hub with food, gas, lodging, supplies and RV sites.

**Tecopa** – Named after Paiute-Shoshone Indian chief, Tecopa was a hard-rock mining camp in the late 1800s, though today, it is best known

for its hot springs. Natural hot water is contained in separate bath houses for men and women, with RV sites and a small store. A surprising sight in this desert is Grimshaw Lake, a favorite of water skiers. Nearby marshes attract migratory birds and were a stopping point along the Old Spanish Trail, a National Historic Trail that passes through Tecopa. A treat five miles south of Tecopa is China Ranch where you can buy all kinds of treats made from dates... date shakes, date baked goods and take your date on a hike beside the federally recognized Wild and Scenic Armargosa River. At Dumont Dunes, 4-wheelers, dune buggies and dirt bikes get airborne in the dunes and take more terrestrial tours through scenic canyons.

## OWENS VALLEY

One of the earliest American explorers described the Owens Valley as containing “ten thousand acres of fine grass.” Today, it is mostly arid. As told in Marc Reisner's book, Cadillac Desert this once-fertile farmland, populated with fruit trees, was the victim of California's Water Wars of the 1900s in which water rights to the Owens River were obtained by Los Angeles. Today, a third of LA's water comes from the valley through the LA Aqueduct. Court rulings and actions by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power have helped restore fish habitat along the river, making it again one of the finest fly fishing streams in the West.



**A family frolics in the Devils Golf Course.**

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO BY KURT MOSES

**Bishop** – Calling itself a Small Town with a Big Backyard, Bishop is the hub for recreation of all kinds, from rock climbing and bouldering in the famed Alabama Hills, to fishing in the Owens River, Bishop Creek Canyon (also a fall colors hotspot) and various local lakes. Bishop is also the jumping-off point for hikers seeking the solitude of the numerous high Sierra trails that wander into the unspoiled wilderness west of town, which also provides dramatic backdrop and sunsets that cannot be forgotten.

The most populated town in Inyo County, Bishop also has the most number of accommodations and services. Bishop began as a ranching town. Later, ranches evolved into pack stations with their sure-footed mules carrying the gear of fishermen and campers back into the Sierra. If any animal expresses the heart of Inyo County, it is the hard-working, intelligent, yet stubborn mule, which is honored annually during Bishop's “Mule Days.”

Long before the ranchers arrived, Paiute Shoshone people lived here. Their reservation sits northwest of town and the Paiute Palace Casino adds excitement to a stay in Bishop. Many of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



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# THE ALLURE OF INYO COUNTY



**It's always a good idea to take water and friends when hiking in Death Valley.**

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK PHOTO

Bishop's visitors include a stop at the Owens Valley Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center and Museum to learn about the first inhabitants of the area and to enjoy experiencing one of the tribe's cultural events.

Today, Bishop is the center of operations for the largest public utility in the nation, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which provides water and power to the nation's most populated city and provides access to the streams it manages for fishing. Southern California Edison also got its start in Bishop, and continues to operate hydroelectric power plants in the Bishop Creek Drainage, and its efforts

to dam up streams and enlarge natural lakes created a world-class string of fishing holes.

**Big Pine** - This small town prides itself on being a gateway to the majestic Sierra Nevada and White Mountains. Drive east and you find the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. Drive west and you find trailheads that lead to the Palisade Glacier and Eastern Sierra. Outfitters run horse packing trips to remote alpine lakes. Numerous fishing holes are found along Big Pine Creek and the Baker Ponds. The Owens River teems with trout, catfish and bass.

**Independence** - The county seat since 1866, Independence is the center of regional history with its historic courthouse; the Edwards House, oldest structure in the county; the Commander's House, a century-old Victorian home; the Mary Austin home (she wrote Land of Little Rain); and the Eastern California Museum, with its extensive exhibits, artifacts, photographs, native plant garden and historic mining and farm equipment. Good fishing is found nearby at Independence Creek, the Onion Valley and along the Owens River. With a name like Independence, it's understandable why the town has one

of the best Independence Day parades with traditional early morning flag raising, pancake breakfast, fun run/walk, small-town parade, homemade ice cream and pie social, kids' games, an arts and crafts show, deep-pit barbecue and sunset fireworks show.

**Lone Pine** - One of the most filmed and photographed landscapes in the county is found surrounding Lone Pine. West of town are the Alabama Hills, named by locals who were Southern sympathizers during the American Civil War. This collection of irregular, ruddy, windswept boulders backed by a horizon of Sierra peaks, has been the backdrop for about 400 Hollywood films from "Gunga Din," to "Gladiator," to "Rawhide," to "Iron Man." It's where Roy Rogers first mounted Trigger, where Tom Mix rode to the rescue and where Robert Downey Jr. got blown up. Lone Pine has been seen in so many movies, that it has commemorated its fame by hosting the annual Lone Pine Film Festival. The Lone Pine Museum of Western Film History preserves the motion picture history of Inyo County with film memorabilia, cars, western carriages and an 84-seat theater.

**Manzanar National Historic Site** - During World War II, about 10,000 people of Japanese ancestry, about 60 percent being American citizens, were brought here to the Manzanar War Relocation Center as part of the "war hysteria" and racism that swept America after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Manzanar was one of 10 Relocation Centers that eventually held about 120,000 people of all ages of Japanese descent for the duration of WW II. Finally, in the 1980s, the US government formally apologized to the internees for their imprisonment without charges. The site is now in the hands of the National Park Service. An interpretive center is located in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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# THE ALLURE OF INYO COUNTY

camp's former auditorium, a number of replica barracks and buildings offer insights into camp life and a self-guided auto tour is offered.

## EASTERN SIERRA

**Mt. Whitney** – On the east side of the Great Western Divide, Mt. Whitney stands 14,508 ft., the tallest mountain in the contiguous United States. Hikers reach the summit through Whitney Portal, 13 miles west of Lone Pine. It's a 10.7 mile hike and requires planning, a wilderness permit and careful attention to advisories regarding the precautions of hiking at high altitudes, obtained within the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor's Center, south of Lone Pine.

**Palisade Glacier** – The southernmost glacier in the U.S. and the largest in the Sierra Nevada is located west of Big Pine and is visible from U.S. 395. The glacier sits at the base of Palisade Crest in the North Fork Basin. The scenery attracts hikers to trails that follow the ancient glacier.

**Rock Creek Canyon** – Between Bishop and Mammoth Lakes is picture-perfect Rock Creek Canyon. Rugged

Eastern Sierra sawtooth peaks rise above emerald meadows, populated with fluttering aspens and cut my meandering clear streams.

**Inyo National Forest and the John Muir Wilderness** – For complete retreat, backpack or take a mule pack trip to the high country, to dozens upon dozens of remote glassine lakes with romantic names like Lake Helen of Troy, Elinore Lake, Moonlight Lake and the Treasure Lakes. You will understand why John Muir wrote, "Climb the mountains, and get their good tidings." Few experiences are as emotionally satiating as being in the rarified air of the Eastern High Sierra in settings whose beauty defy description.

**Sierra Bighorn Sheep** – Three subspecies of bighorn sheep live in the United States. You can see two of them within minutes of one another in Inyo County, California. Sierra Bighorn can be seen in Eastern Sierra canyons. From U.S. 395, north of Bishop, follow Pine Creek Road through Round Valley. In the last couple of miles before the road ends, look up to the north to see the buff-colored coats of the Sierra Bighorn Sheep as they graze among

pinus and brush. You will be surprised how well they blend into the landscape and how difficult it is, at first, to see them. With practice, it becomes easier. There are no formal tours to see the bighorn, however the Bishop office of the California Department of Fish and Game can explain how best to see the elusive bighorns. Some tips: the Bighorn will not let you get closer than a couple of hundred yards, so bring powerful binoculars or a camera with a telephoto lens and enjoy seeing them from a distance.

## WHITE MOUNTAINS

**Ancient Bristlecone Forest** – Thirty-six miles east of Big Pine in the White Mountains at elevations over 9,000 ft grow the oldest living trees. The oldest of them, Mehtuselah, is estimated to be nearly 4,800 years old. Several groves of the venerable trees can be seen. Exhibits at the visitor center at Schulman Grove describe the trees. From Big Pine, travel east on CA-168 to the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest Scenic Byway.

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- Pediatrics
- Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy
- Podiatry

- Respiratory & Sleep Lab
- Rural Health Clinic
- Southern Sierra Medical Clinic
- Telepsychiatry
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