



**TRAVEL PLANNER**

# **Death Valley— California's Dramatic Desert**



**Biking • Casual Hotels • 4-Day Getaway**

DVY-B-HC-R-001-25 8/23/2024



# Death Valley—California's Dramatic Desert

Itinerary	4
Trip Accommodations	7
Arriving & Departing	7
During Your Trip	9
Destination Details	11
Trip Documents & More	12
Getting Active for Your Trip	13
Biking Safety & Gear	15
Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip	17
Extending Your Vacation	19
Suggested Packing List	20

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 **BACKROADS**



# STRAIGHT TALK

We want to make sure you're on the right trip and that you have the best experience possible. Every Backroads trip is unique and this one is no exception.

## Climate

Death Valley is a land of extremes. At times, weather conditions (like high winds or even the occasional rainstorm) may warrant unexpected changes to our itinerary. In this event, alternate activities will be planned that you're sure to enjoy.

## Accommodations & Service Standards

The Inn at Death Valley received a multimillion-dollar renovation in 2018. It is a grand historical treasure and by far the best place to stay in the Death Valley area. While its location within Death Valley National Park makes it an ideal base for exploring the valley's many sights, it is also subject to park regulations and oversight. Similar to many national park lodges, service at The Inn at Death Valley can seem slow and casual compared to the high standards of hospitality found on other Backroads trips.



## Day 1

**Meeting Time:** 8 a.m.

**Meeting Location:** The **Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa**, located at 160 East Flamingo Road in **Las Vegas**, Nevada.

**Additional Details:** Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) next to the valet area just outside of the hotel.

**Attire & Luggage:** Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

**LATE TO THE TRIP START? See "Arriving & Departing" for more information.**

**Shuttle to Red Spring Picnic Area** 30 Minutes

**Red Rock Canyon Ride** 22 Miles\* (1,800' elevation gain)

**Shuttle to Inn at Death Valley** 2 Hours

*\*with shuttle*

Welcome to the Mojave Desert! After meeting we shuttle to the starting point for our first ride near Red Rock Canyon, Nevada's first National Conservation Area. The canyon is home to a wide variety of animal life and plants, including 15 botanical species that exist nowhere else in the world!

Arriving at the Red Spring Picnic Area, your Backroads Trip Leaders fit your bike and give a brief talk on biking techniques and safety. Then it's time for a spin amid the gorgeous scenery of Red Rock Canyon. We begin by pedaling through a residential neighborhood before turning onto Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive and heading into the park. Soon we encounter our first climb of the day, which leads to a stunning overlook. Feel free to jump in the shuttle if you need a boost up the hill. Make sure to enjoy the vistas along the way and take time to see the Petroglyph Wall.

Following lunch, we head to the iconic Inn at Death Valley, an Old Hollywood getaway since 1927. Situated on a low hill at the mouth of Furnace Creek Wash, this elegant Spanish Mission-style resort marries

Hollywood Golden Age glamour with modern style. Furnace Creek is a natural oasis where 50 freshwater springs provide water for drinking, showers, irrigation and even the swimming pool at the hotel. Settle into your room before we gather for a welcome reception and delicious dinner at the on-site restaurant. *Lodging: The Inn at Death Valley*

## Day 2

**Shuttle to Rhyolite** 45 Minutes

**Rhyolite Ghost Town Visit** 30 Minutes

### AM Biking Options:

Hell's Gate Route: 17 Miles\* (1,000' elevation gain)

Mesquite Sand Dunes Route: 30 Miles\* (1,100')

### PM Biking Options:

Inn at Death Valley Route: 24 Miles (700')

*\*with shuttle*

This morning we shuttle to the historic ghost town of Rhyolite—named after the silica-rich volcanic rock in the landscape. Prospectors rushed to get rich by mining the seemingly plentiful mineral deposits in the early 1900s. New buildings sprung up everywhere including hotels, two electric plants and a three-story structure with the hefty price tag of \$90,000. After only a few years, however, the area was mined clean of any valuable ore. By 1916, power to the town had been shut off.

We explore what remains of this once-prosperous town: the shell of a train station, casino and several homes dotting the landscape. Enjoy the eerie quiet as you imagine it during the time of its peak population, when an estimated 10,000 people lived in and around this area.

After our tour, hop on your bike and head into the park for today's ride! Soon after passing the park entrance sign, you begin ascending into the Grapevine Mountains, continuing to Daylight Pass, the highest biking elevation of our trip at 4,400 feet. After the climb, enjoy a long descent back into Death Valley with sweeping views of the Panamint Range and Salt Creek—this ride is a guest favorite! Just past Hell's Gate, we meet up for a picnic lunch at the Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes, one of the largest sand dune networks in the

United States. Feel free to venture out and explore before returning to the hotel in the shuttle or on your bike.

Dinner tonight is at your leisure. Later, you may want to check out the night sky—Death Valley is designated by the International Dark Sky Association as the largest Dark Sky National Park in the country. Distant from the light pollution of major cities, this place brings stargazing to a new level with its exceptional nocturnal environment. It doesn't get any better than this!

*Lodging: The Inn at Death Valley*



## Day 3

### Biking Options:

Badwater Direct Route: 17 Miles\* (500' elevation gain)

Badwater Out-&-Back: 34 Miles (1,300')

Badwater Out-&-Back with Artist's Drive Loop: 39 Miles (2600')

*\*with shuttle*

This morning we head out on a ride to the lowest point in the United States: Badwater. Our route takes us over smooth terrain with some gradual downhills and short steep inclines thrown in. If you need a change of pace, forgo today's route and opt to play a round of golf at the lowest course in the world—214 feet below sea level! (Golf is not included in the trip price.)

According to legend, Badwater was inadvertently named by an early surveyor who wrote "bad water" on the map when his mule refused to drink here. (You can't blame the mule—the water supposedly tastes like a concentrated dose of Epsom salts!) Although Badwater

initially appears to be downright inhospitable, a closer look reveals a thriving ecosystem. Keep an eye out for salt lovers such as pickleweed and the iodine bush, as well as the valley's indigenous soft-bodied saltwater snail.

Back on your bike, return through the valley to The Inn at Death Valley. Notice the Great Salt Flats shimmering in the distance—the mesmerizing mirage makes it appear as if you've reached the ocean's shore. If you are feeling energetic, turn off Badwater Road and tackle the hilly Artist's Drive scenic loop. The landscape's colorful palette is especially beautiful in the afternoon light. Your ride is framed by the magnificent Panamint Range to the west and the Black Mountains to the east.

This afternoon, there's time to explore the hotel property, relax in the unique spring-fed swimming pool or join your leaders for a drive up to Dante's View for some of the best views in the park! Set at over 5000 feet, the lookout point offers a stunning panorama that includes Badwater and Telescope Peak.

Or consider treating yourself to a massage or wellness treatment. (Spa treatments are not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended.) In the evening, we regroup for a celebratory farewell meal.  
*Lodging: The Inn at Death Valley*

## Day 4

**Golden Canyon Hike** 3 Miles (1,000' elevation gain)

Today we head out for a hike through the badlands of Death Valley to Zabriskie Point—a classic desert setting. Surrounded by tall sandstone walls, walk through a maze of multicolored rock. You'll pass under 823-foot Manly Beacon, named for William Manly, who led his stranded emigrant party safely out of Death Valley in 1849. Take in the amazing Panamint Range, including Telescope Peak, and the badlands' yellow sandstone. If you look to the south, you'll see ancient lava flows in the Black Mountains.

After the morning hike, there's time for a quick shower at the hotel before we have lunch and shuttle back to Las Vegas, where our trip ends. See "Arriving and Departing" for end-of-trip logistics.



### KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We'll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.

### SHIFT GEARS

Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of the region the way YOU want. Feel like you're ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want some downtime or prefer to head out on your own? No problem!

Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you're missing out.

So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!

# Trip Accommodations

## Casual Hotels



### 3 Nights

#### The Inn at Death Valley

Nestled at the foot of the Funeral Mountains, this historic Mission-style hotel sits almost 200 feet below sea level. (pool, spa) | Furnace Creek |

[www.oasisatdeathvalley.com](http://www.oasisatdeathvalley.com) | 760-786-2345

# Arriving & Departing

After reviewing the following information, please inform us of your arrival and departure plans on your *Personal Information Form*.

## Meeting Time & Location

**Meeting Time: 8 a.m.**

**Meeting Location:** The **Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa**, located at 160 East Flamingo Road in **Las Vegas**, Nevada.

**Additional Details:** Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) next to the valet area just outside of the hotel.

**Attire & Luggage:** Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

## Arriving Late to the Trip Start?

If you have a delay or emergency on the day your trip starts and need to contact Backroads, please email your Trip Leaders (you'll receive an email 48 hours prior to the trip start with their contact info) or call the Backroads office at 800-462-2848 (domestic) or 510-527-1555 (international).

**To make the early-morning meeting time, we recommend arriving in Las Vegas at least one day before the trip starts.**

## Conclusion of the Trip

### Trip End Times & Locations:

- **12:30 p.m.** at **The Inn at Death Valley**
- **3 p.m.** at the **Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa**

**Additional Details:** Backroads provides transportation back to the Westin, arriving at around 3 p.m. If you're flying out of Las Vegas on the last day of the trip, please schedule your flight for after 5 p.m.

## Flight Arrangements

This trip starts and ends in Las Vegas, Nevada. We suggest flying into Harry Reid International Airport (airport code: LAS; [www.harryreidairport.com](http://www.harryreidairport.com)) in Las Vegas.

For help arranging air transportation to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the airline, or through a travel website.

## Getting from the Airport to Downtown Las Vegas & The Strip

The following transportation services are available between Harry Reid International Airport and hotels on the Strip and in downtown Las Vegas. For additional options, visit the airport's website at [www.harryreidairport.com](http://www.harryreidairport.com).

**Bell Trans** ([www.bell-trans.com](http://www.bell-trans.com); 800-274-7433 or 702-739-7990) offers shared shuttle service between the airport and the resort corridor hotels of Las Vegas Blvd and the Downtown area for \$15 per person, one-way; travel time may take 30-45 minutes and each shuttle will stop at 3-5 hotels. You can buy tickets at Terminal 1 outside door 8 and Terminal 3 outside door 51. For departures from hotels back to the airport, you must make reservations at least 24 hours before your flight. The shuttle runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and picks up and drops off at select downtown and Strip hotels.

### Regional Transit Commission (RTC) System

([www.rtcnv.com/](http://www.rtcnv.com/); 702-228-7433) is also a reliable way to navigate Las Vegas. The Paradise bus (No. 108) departs the airport about every 30 minutes from below the baggage claim area at Level 0 (zero). The trip to the drop-off location at the Sahara Station, a block from the Strip, takes about 25 minutes. Visitors are required to buy a Strip and All Access pass, with options for 2-hour (\$6), 24-hour (\$8) or 3-day (\$20) passes.

**Taxis** are also available. You can find them on the east side of the baggage claim, outside Doors No. 1-4 and on

Level Zero in Terminal 3, where you'll find them on the west end of the building, outside exit door numbered 52.



**WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF®**

## Making a Positive Impact

We are delighted to support World Bicycle Relief's mission of providing bicycles to rural workers, students and healthcare providers worldwide, especially women. Our involvement with WBR complements our efforts to promote and improve biking in communities where our guests live and visit.

[Visit worldbicyclerelief.org to learn more.](http://worldbicyclerelief.org)



# During Your Trip

## Backroads On Trip App

Enjoy the convenience of your itinerary details in one place, including daily snapshots, routes, elevation profiles and more. We'll send you an email seven days before your trip starts with the link and code for your itinerary. We encourage you to download the app and the trip experience before you depart (your leaders can help you on trip if needed). Just search for "Backroads" in the Apple App store or the Google Play Store.

## Trip Leaders

Each of your Trip Leaders plays many roles during your vacation: guide, host, caretaker, naturalist, chef, historian, troubleshooter, interpreter. These remarkable individuals have highly developed instincts for making people comfortable, for seamlessly handling the logistics of travel and for successfully navigating a wide range of unexpected situations. They're passionately committed to ensuring you enjoy an exceptional vacation—smooth, flexible and tailored to your needs. According to past guests, the caliber of our leaders is what sets Backroads apart from all other travel companies. With their knowledge, professionalism, enthusiasm and service ethic, they're the number-one reason people return to travel with us again and again. We look forward to having you meet them.

## A Word about Gratuities

*We think our leaders are unparalleled at what they do —you be the judge.*

Gratuities for most services during your trip are included in the price. While we've thought about including a Trip Leader tip as part of the overall trip cost, we acknowledge that gratuities are often customary as a way to recognize excellent service on a more personal level.

We offer specific Trip Leader tip recommendations because our guests have consistently asked for them.

**Our recommended gratuity for this trip is \$175 per guest.**

While cash gratuities are always preferred, checks (on

US trips only; payable to a Trip Leader) or PayPal are also available options. At the beginning of the trip you'll receive a contact list with your leaders' email addresses, which also serve as their PayPal IDs. Regardless of the number of leaders on your trip, you can pay the full amount to any one of them. All gratuities are then divided among your leaders.

## Accommodations

While Backroads utilizes the best properties in the regions that we visit, simplicity and comfort outweigh elegance and luxury in the rugged environs of Death Valley. The Inn at Death Valley is an excellent hotel, but the service is more along the lines of a national park lodge as staffing is limited and seasonal in the area. All rooms have private baths.

## Cell Service & Internet Access

There is some cell phone reception at The Inn at Death Valley, but service outside of the resort area is very limited. Wireless internet access is available in each guest room, although the connection may be slower than ideal.

## Meals

Food is an important part of the Backroads experience. For lunch we look for the best way to capture the essence of the region. It may be a Backroads Grand Picnic, when your Trip Leaders prepare the freshest and healthiest local fare at a carefully chosen setting along the day's route; a boxed lunch; a packed lunch; a meal together at a favorite restaurant; or the opportunity to have lunch on your own.

Our dinners feature classic Southwestern American fare.

All breakfasts, four lunches and three dinners are included in the trip price.

Be aware that vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free and low-carb dishes are not always available. If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate them on the *Personal Information Form*. Your Trip Consultant will pass on the information to your Trip Leaders. Alcoholic beverages at meals are not included in the trip price, unless otherwise noted.

## Recommended Dinner Attire

Restaurants on this trip are casual. You'll feel comfortable wearing anything from jeans and T-shirts to slacks and dressier shirts. However, the dress code at the hotel's restaurant is resort attire, and T-shirts and tank tops are not appropriate.

## Lost Luggage

On any flight, there is the possibility of lost luggage. Backroads believes that it's a great idea to take a small carry-on bag with enough clothing and supplies to last a day or two. Also be sure to bring with you any personal gear you deem indispensable on the trip. This way, in the event of lost luggage you won't have to spend time replacing essential items and miss activities while you wait for your bags to catch up. Please note that Backroads does not assume responsibility for any luggage lost or damaged during your trip.

## Firearms

The National Park Service requires us to inform you that national park regulations generally allow firearms. However, it is Backroads' policy to prohibit guests from bringing firearms on any trips including, but not limited to, those going to national parks.

## Trip Guest List

During the trip, leaders will distribute a guest list that includes the names and contact information of everyone on the trip. If you do not want your contact information to appear on the guest list, please inform your Trip Consultant at least 30 days prior to the trip start.

## Spa Treatments

The Wellness Sanctuary at Death Valley offers a range of spa treatments in two rooms near the spring-fed swimming pool at The Inn at Death Valley.

Reservations can be made online at [www.sanctuaryatdv.com](http://www.sanctuaryatdv.com). Due to high demand, please make your appointments well in advance. Be sure to review the spa's cancellation policy to avoid any unexpected charges on your credit card.

## Days 2 & 3

On **Day 2** book an appointment for after 3:30 p.m.; dinner is at your leisure. On **Day 3** book an appointment for after 2 p.m.; our farewell reception starts at 6:15 p.m.



# Destination Details

## Climate

Though the weather in Death Valley is often mild and pleasant, high winds and strong sun can sometimes create extreme conditions. Please note that the temperatures in the chart below are averages; **temperatures can soar to over 100 degrees during the day and drop as low as the 30s at night.** Although the average rainfall in Death Valley during the time of our trips is slight, heavy rainstorms are still possible. Additionally, wind gusts of up to 50 miles per hour are not uncommon. When looking up the weather forecast for your trip, search for "Furnace Creek" instead of "Death Valley" to designate a more accurate location.

### Red Rock Canyon

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	54	57	64	71	81	91
Low °F	29	32	38	44	54	64
Precip. inches	1.38	2.02	1.47	.55	0.17	.12
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	97	95	88	75	62	53
Low °F	70	69	59	47	35	29
Precip. inches	0.82	1.00	0.55	0.54	0.8	1.13

### Furnace Creek

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	64	71	80	89	98	107
Low °F	37	44	51	60	69	78
Precip. inches	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	114	113	105	91	75	64
Low °F	86	84	73	59	46	37
Precip. inches	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2

## Visitor Information

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

Visit California: Death Valley  
[www.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.visitcalifornia.com)

## Helpful Information

Visit [www.backroads.com/trip\\_prep](http://www.backroads.com/trip_prep) for links to other websites offering helpful travel information.

## RECOMMENDED READING



The more you know about your destination before you go, the more you'll appreciate all that you see when you get there. We've selected a few of our favorite books to help capture the essence of the region.

- *Desert Solitaire*, Edward Abbey
- *The Land of Little Rain*, Mary Austin
- *The Explorer's Guide to Death Valley National Park*, T. Scott Bryan
- *Death Valley and the Amargosa, Land of Illusion*, Richard E. Lingenfelter

## PRICES & SCHEDULES

All prices and schedules were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change at any time.



# Trip Documents & More

## Travel Protection Plan

Backroads' travel protection plan, offered through our preferred insurance company, provides coverage for trip cancellation or interruption, trip delay, medical expenses and evacuation/repatriation, lost baggage and more. We know that the unexpected sometimes happens and we strongly recommend protecting your travel investment. If you're interested in purchasing the plan, give us a call at 800-462-2848.

## Cancellations & Refunds

If you must cancel your reservation, a fee will be charged. Please review your trip invoice for cancellation policy details. **Exceptions to this policy cannot be made for any reason**, including those of weather or personal emergencies. There is no refund for joining a trip late or leaving early. Private rooms and staterooms, bike rentals and internal air charges are considered part of the trip price and are subject to cancellation fees. You are required to provide a signed *Release of Liability, Assumption of All Risks and Arbitration Agreement* and a completed *Personal Information Form* prior to your trip departure. If you fail to provide a signed release form, you will not be allowed to join the trip and will be subject to Backroads' cancellation policy. For complete details on our cancellation policy, see [www.backroads.com](http://www.backroads.com).

## Transfers

With the exception of Private and Custom Trips, you may transfer from one trip to another without penalty, within the parameters of your trip's transfer policy. When transferring to a different date or trip, if the trip costs more than your original trip, you are responsible for the difference in cost. Please review your trip invoice for additional transfer policy details. After the allowable transfer date, our cancellation policy applies. Cancellation penalties will not be charged if you are able to fill the vacancy with another guest(s).

## Itinerary Changes

If unforeseen circumstances require a change in the trip itinerary, Backroads will make every effort to select alternative accommodations of the same quality and to keep the activity modifications minimal.

## On-Your-Own Activities

During the trip, there may be time for you to enjoy some of the region's favorite physical activities on your own. These activities may be a highlight for those who choose to do them, but due to liability and because they're not to everyone's liking, these activities are not included in the price of the trip. Backroads does not run these activities and is not responsible for their operation, and makes no representation concerning that entity's liability insurance or the existence of any such insurance. Participation is at your own risk.

## Electronics & Other Valuables

It is best to leave valuables at home. If you must bring valuables on the trip, please understand that they are 100 percent your responsibility, regardless of what anyone (including leaders) might tell you. Cash, jewelry and passports are especially important to keep in your possession. It's not safe to leave valuables in Backroads vans; while not common, break-ins do happen. You may choose to lock them in your room's safe, if one is available to you. If you're concerned about forgetting items in the safe (easy to do!), a good trick is to leave something on top of it that you can't forget, such as a single shoe.

On Biking and Multi-Adventure Trips, if detachable bike bags are available to you, you can store your valuables in the bag and take it with you when you're not biking. **Please note that our bike bags are water-resistant but not waterproof.** Be sure to protect your valuables from the elements accordingly.

Although we will transport your valuables during your trip as a convenience, **we do not assume responsibility for any damage or loss.** This policy applies to personal electronics as well as other items, such as luggage, jewelry, and fragile and delicate accessories, whether purchased on the trip or otherwise.

After your trip ends, if you realize that you've accidentally left an item behind in Backroads' possession, we'll do our best to honor return requests. However, we're not able to guarantee returns based on leader availability, limitations to find and send items (our leaders are on the go!) and possible shipping issues. If you've left an item at a hotel, please contact that hotel directly to make arrangements.



# Getting Active for Your Trip

## CHECK OUT THE WAHOO FITNESS ELEMNT ROAM v2

Our state-of-the-art GPS devices offer easy-to-follow directions and come pre-loaded with all the route options specific to this Backroads trip.



GUEST PHOTO CONTEST

Enter to win up to  
\$5,000 in Backroads  
Trip Credit!

\$250 in Backroads Trip Credit awarded to  
75+ honorable mentions

For rules go to [backroads.com/photo-contest](http://backroads.com/photo-contest)

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

The routes on this trip are rated Levels 2–4.

	BIKING		WALKING & HIKING	
	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain (feet)	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain (feet)
<b>Level 1</b> (2-3 hours)	8-22	1000'	2-5	800'
<b>Level 2</b> (2-4 hours)	18-32	2200'	4-7	1300'
<b>Level 3</b> (2-5 hours)	26-42	3400'	5-9	2000'
<b>Level 4</b> (4-6 hours)	36-54	4400'	6-11	3000'
<b>Level 5</b> (5-7+ hours)	48-70+	4400'+	7-13+	4000'+

Review the "Activity Level" section on the web for more details on daily route options.

### Route & Terrain Notes

The biking routes on this trip follow paved roads in Red Rock Canyon and Death Valley National Park. Terrain varies from level to rolling with a few steeper hills and bigger descents. Possible extreme weather conditions, such as heat and wind, can make the biking feel more challenging than the mileage suggests.

Remember, take your time and go at your own pace—

you're on vacation! Your Backroads Trip Leaders are there to provide the support you need when you're ready for a snack, a cool drink, or a lift back if you're done for the day. Most days you'll have a choice of mileage options, so you can decide how active you want to be—it's always up to you.

## Conditioning Tips

Every Backroads trip is designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and fitness levels. We know your pace may vary from one day to the next—and your traveling companions' may differ somewhat from yours. So we present a range of mileage options, and each day you decide exactly what and how much you want to do.

Before your trip, we suggest biking regularly and hitting a few hills whenever you can. Review the route options in the daily itinerary for the range of mileages offered on this trip. But mostly, just show up and have fun!

## Cadence & Gearing

The steady rate at which you pedal is called “cadence.” Ideally you should try to maintain a constant high cadence in any gear. This technique not only lets you bike for longer periods without tiring, but also puts less strain on your knees. Shifting to lower gears when riding up hills will help you maintain the same cadence you established on more level terrain and get you up the hills without overextending yourself. Using lower gears also helps you to be more efficient when riding against the wind.

## Pacing & Endurance

It's important to pace yourself throughout the day, so you have the stamina to ride or walk as far and as long as you'd like. Keep your energy level constant by eating high-energy snacks (your leaders will have plenty on hand). Drink fluids often—before you are thirsty—to avoid dehydration.

## Resources

One book we recommend is *The Bicycling Big Book of Cycling for Beginners* by Tori Bortman. It offers valuable advice for new cyclists, from choosing the proper clothing to basic riding and etiquette skills.

Visit *Bicycling* magazine's website at [www.bicycling.com](http://www.bicycling.com) to browse for tips on how to improve your technique—as well as advice on nutrition, gear and safety, and basic bike maintenance.

Your local outdoor store can be an excellent resource too; ask to speak with an experienced employee.

## Staying Comfortable: FAQs

### Q: How do I prevent soreness while bicycling?

**A:** Think padding! Padded shorts make sitting on the bicycle seat a lot more comfortable, and padded bicycling gloves help prevent blisters and hand numbness.

### Q: Should I buy a pair of biking shoes for my trip?

**A:** Rigid shoes maximize the power of your pedaling stroke, but there's really no need to purchase a pair of biking shoes just for this trip. Any athletic shoes—provided they have stiff soles—will be sufficient.

### Q: It's not really going to rain during the trip, is it?

**A:** Well, it just might! Rain is possible no matter where you travel. Your best bet for staying comfortable during a shower is to wear quality rain gear that is both waterproof and breathable.

### Q: Does wearing layers really make a difference?

**A:** Yes! The trick for staying comfortable in fluctuating temperatures is to wear three basic non-cotton layers of lightweight clothing: innerwear (to wick moisture away from your skin), insulating garments (for warmth) and outerwear (to protect against wind or rain). The different layers let you add or remove clothing in response to changes in the weather or your internal temperature.

# Biking Safety & Gear

## Rules of Biking Safety

Good judgment and alertness are the most important factors for safe bicycling. Follow these rules at all times to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

- **Wear a helmet. Bicycling without a helmet is extremely dangerous. Backroads requires that all guests wear helmets while biking.**
- Ride predictably, defensively and in a straight line.
- When biking with others, ride single file and maintain several bike lengths between cyclists. Allow more distance when riding downhill.
- Do not use headphones while biking; you might not hear traffic coming up behind you.
- Be as courteous to motorists as you would like them to be to you, and get completely off the road when you stop.
- Keep your speed under control on downhills. Use both brakes simultaneously, but be aware that the front brake is more powerful than the rear. Gently pump your brakes on long descents for maximum effectiveness. Check brakes frequently to make sure nothing is loose or dangling.
- Wet slippery roads require extra caution and greater stopping distance—especially on downhills. Wet brakes must be dried by pumping before they have an effect, so start braking early in damp weather.
- When riding on sand or gravel, downshift into low gear so you can spin your pedals faster while still going slowly.
- Obey all traffic regulations. Stop at all stop signs and red lights, yield the right-of-way and use hand signals when turning, slowing down or stopping. Ride on the right side of the road (except in countries where traffic moves on the left), at a safe distance from traffic.
- Do not ride too close to the bike in front of you; keeping several bike lengths between you and the bike ahead gives you more time to brake or go around obstacles.
- Be cautious around road obstacles. It is safest to dismount and walk your bike across railroad tracks and cattle guards. If you decide to bike across them, do so at right angles. Avoid potholes, metal grates, glass, rocks and thorns. Ride at a safe distance from parked cars and watch for vehicles pulling out and/or doors opening in your path.
- You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. Do not ride on sidewalks.
- When making a left turn (or a right turn in countries where traffic moves on the left), it is safest to pull off the road, dismount, look both ways for traffic and then walk your bike across the road. Never follow other riders when turning without confirming for yourself that it is safe to do so.
- Listen carefully for approaching motorists. (Look over your shoulder only if you can do so without swerving.)
- We do not bike after dark on Backroads trips. If you decide to do so on your own, you must bring your own bike equipped with a white light on the front, a red light on the rear and reflectors on the spokes and pedals.
- If a dog chases you and you are not able to ride away quickly, stop your bike and walk out of the dog's territory, keeping the bike between you and the animal.
- Wear appropriate clothing for bicycling. Brightly colored clothes make you more visible to motorists. Double-tie shoelaces and tuck them inside your shoes.
- You should wear corrective lenses while bicycling if you use them while driving.

## Bringing Your Own Gear

Backroads provides everything you'll need to participate in the activities on this trip. If you'd prefer to have your own pedals, helmet or seat, feel free to bring these along. Your own gear can help to make your time on the bike as comfortable as possible, especially if you're someone who likes to log a lot of miles. Your Backroads leaders will be happy to put on your pedals and seat for you at the beginning of the trip.

## Bike Equipment

The following items are included with all Backroads titanium bikes. Trip Leaders also have full tool kits on hand and are available to do mechanical repairs.

- bike helmet
- water bottle
- safety triangle
- lock and cable
- tube and patch kit with tire levers
- rear rack and reflective trunk bag
- map case
- wide range of gears
- GPS device

If you are bringing your own bike and are comfortable doing minor on-the-road adjustments, you may want to bring a multi-tool. If your bike is highly specialized, bring any tools—and extra spokes and tubes!—that are specific to your bike. Use the above list as a guide for recommended equipment if you are bringing your own bike.

## Bringing Your Own Bike

If you plan to bring your own bike, it should be tuned and in excellent mechanical condition and ready to ride before the trip starts. Otherwise, you are welcome to use a Backroads bike. If your bike is new, ride it at least 50 miles (to break it in) and then have it adjusted by a professional mechanic. Please bring only one bike per person.

The following items on your bike should be properly adjusted and in good condition: brakes and brake pads; the headset, pedals, cranks and hubs; gears; derailleurs; handlebars; tires and tubes; brake and derailleur cables; and the chain. Make sure the bike is well lubricated, the wheels are true, and the seat, seatpost and handlebars are adjusted and tight.

For more tips on traveling with your own bike, visit [www.backroads.com/pro-tips/biking/how-to-travel-with-your-bike](http://www.backroads.com/pro-tips/biking/how-to-travel-with-your-bike).





# Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip

For help arranging hotel accommodations for before and after your Backroads trip, or an extension to your trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the hotel, or through a travel website.

If you plan on extending your stay at our hotel before the trip starts or when the trip ends, let the hotel reservations agent know that you're traveling with Backroads; that way you may be able to avoid changing rooms.

The following is a selection of recommended properties that span a range of prices, amenities and locations. Refer to the Hotel Room Rates guide for the starting double-occupancy rates, which were accurate at time of printing. Note that rates are subject to change and some hotels may require a minimum stay.

## HOTEL ROOM RATES

IN US DOLLARS PER NIGHT

<b>\$501 and up</b> .....	◆◆◆◆◆
<b>\$301 to \$500</b> .....	◆◆◆◆◆
<b>\$201 to \$300</b> .....	◆◆◆◆◆
<b>Up to \$200</b> .....	◆◆◆◆◆

**The Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa** in Las Vegas is our meeting location on Day 1 and a drop-off location on Day 4. See the following for more information on this hotel.

## Las Vegas Strip

Hotel map: [bit.ly/LasVegasPPH](http://bit.ly/LasVegasPPH)

### Four Seasons Las Vegas

Featuring recently renovated guest rooms, the Four Seasons Las Vegas occupies four floors of the Mandalay Bay resort, offering a little slice of serenity amid the pulsing energy of the Las Vegas Strip. This gaming-free oasis has its own private entrance and laid back pool scene, but gives you full access to the Mandalay Bay's sprawling pool complex as well all that Las Vegas has to offer. (spa, pool) | 3960 Las Vegas Blvd. South | [www.fourseasons.com/lasvegas](http://www.fourseasons.com/lasvegas) | 702-632-5000 | 424 rooms | Rates: ◆◆◆◆

### Wynn Las Vegas

One of the most distinguished hotels on the Vegas Strip, the recently renovated Wynn sets itself apart with opulent luxury down to the finest detail. (pool, spa) | 3131 Las Vegas Boulevard South | [www.wynnlasvegas.com](http://www.wynnlasvegas.com) | 702-770-7000 | 2,700 suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆

### Bellagio

The Bellagio invites you into an extravagant world of glamour and sophistication unlike any other. A 2023 multi-million dollar renovation to its Spa Tower guest rooms was inspired by the beauty of Lake Como. (pool, spa) | 3600 Las Vegas Boulevard South | [www.bellagio.com](http://www.bellagio.com) | 888-987-6667 | 3,933 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆

### NoMad Las Vegas

Old-world luxury is the vibe at the reimagined former Monte Carlo, located within The Park MGM, an ideal location on The Strip, with Shops at Crystals and The Cosmopolitan just a short walk away. Make sure to spend some time on the third floor at the rooftop deck and Moroccan-inspired pool area. *Condé Nast Traveler*

Gold List. (pool, spa) | 3772 S Las Vegas Blvd. | [nomadlasvegas.mgmresorts.com](http://nomadlasvegas.mgmresorts.com) | 702-730-7000 | 293 rooms | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

### Vdara Hotel & Spa at ARIA Las Vegas

A unique all-suite hotel on The Strip, Vdara suites offer the perfect combination of home and relaxing getaway, featuring kitchenettes with refrigerators and stovetops, and spa-like bathrooms. But the actual spa, ESPA at Vdara is the real draw and one of the nicest in Vegas. (pool, spa) | 2600 W Harmon Ave. | [vdara.mgmresorts.com](http://vdara.mgmresorts.com) | 702-590-2111 | 1400 rooms | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

### Venetian

Recreating Venice under one enormous roof, the Venetian offers a world of piazzas, arched bridges, exclusive Italian boutiques, frescoed corridors and gold ceilings. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (pool, spa) | 3355 Las Vegas Boulevard South | [www.venetian.com](http://www.venetian.com) | 702-414-1000 | 4,027 suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

### Off the Strip

#### Marriott's Grand Chateaux

This villa-style property from Marriott offers a rooftop bar and swimming pool with great views of the Strip—less than a 10-minute walk away. It's a quiet homebase after a day of activity in and around Las Vegas. (pool) | 75 East Harmon Avenue | [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) | 702-862-5600 | 901 rooms | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

#### Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa

Tucked away on a quiet street but still close to the action of the Vegas Strip, this signature Westin property features a roof-top pool and private cabanas. (pool, spa) | 160 East Flamingo Road | [www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/lasvw-the-westin-las-vegas-hotel-and-spa](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/lasvw-the-westin-las-vegas-hotel-and-spa) | 702-836-5900 | 826 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

#### Platinum Hotel & Spa

This all-suite boutique hotel is a refined and welcoming retreat in the heart of the city, walking distance from the Strip. Enjoy extra spacious rooms

and walk-out balconies with views of the Strip and the mountains. (pool, spa) | 211 East Flamingo Road | [www.theplatinumhotel.com](http://www.theplatinumhotel.com) | 702-365-5000 | 255 suites | Rates: ♦ ♦

### Renaissance Las Vegas

Sophisticated and luxurious, this **non-gaming hotel** is just two blocks from the decadence of Las Vegas Boulevard yet offers relief from the buzz of the mega Strip hotels. (pool) | 3400 Paradise Road | [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) | 702-784-5700 | 578 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦

### For Your Convenience

While the following hotels are more basic than the above recommendations, we've included them for their comfortable accommodations and convenient locations.

#### Residence Inn by Marriott Las Vegas Airport

7690 South Las Vegas Blvd. | [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) | 702-407-1942 | 131 suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

#### Best Western Las Vegas (Harry Reid International Airport)

4970 Paradise Road | [www.bestwesternhotel.vegas](http://www.bestwesternhotel.vegas) | 800-780-7234 or 702-798-5530 | 100 rooms | Rates: ♦ ♦

# Extending Your Vacation

## Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

lies in Nevada's Mojave Desert. It's known for geological features such as towering red sandstone peaks and the Keystone Thrust Fault, as well as Native American petroglyphs. Panoramic viewing spots dot the 13-mile Scenic Drive. The sheltered Ice Box Canyon has seasonal waterfalls. To the south, Spring Mountain Ranch State Park features historic buildings and hiking trails. This beautiful area is just 35 minutes outside of Las Vegas and offers amazing cycling and hiking. It's also one of the most famous rock climbing destinations in the world.

**Valley of Fire State Park** is a public recreation and nature preservation area covering nearly 46,000 acres of land and is located just over an hour outside of Las Vegas. This state park contains petrified trees and petroglyphs dating back more than 2,000 years and derives its name from red sandstone formations, the Aztec Sandstone, which formed from shifting sand dunes 150 million years ago. This park makes for a great scenic drive as well as offering numerous hiking options.



# Suggested Packing List

## LUGGAGE REMINDERS

Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase (we recommend 25"–28", preferably not hard case) and one small carry-on bag. Be sure to mark your luggage with your contact information.

### Essential

#### Travel Items

- wallet (credit cards, bank cards & ID if you are flying to the trip start)
- cash for incidentals & leader gratuities
- airline tickets/e-ticket confirmation details
- sealable, quart-size plastic bags for stowing small liquid containers, swimsuit, etc.
- toiletries (including sunscreen & lip ointment)
- medications & copies of prescriptions
- list of important addresses & contact numbers

#### Biking Clothing & Gear

- stiff-soled sneakers or biking shoes (& pedals)
- biking socks
- biking shorts (preferably with padding/chamois)
- short-sleeved biking jerseys
- non-cotton base layers of varying weights
- short-fingered biking gloves
- sunglasses (with retention strap)
- lightweight biking jacket or vest

#### Active Clothing (Non-Biking)

- walking/hiking shorts and/or lightweight pants
- walking/running shoes
- hat with brim

- swimsuit

### Rain Gear & Cold Weather Clothing

Though the weather in Death Valley is often mild and pleasant, the area's unique climate can sometimes create extreme conditions. You may not need all of the items listed here, but they are necessary to stay comfortable in case of rain or cold weather.

- waterproof (breathable) rain jacket & pants
- arm & knee/leg warmers (for biking)
- toe covers/booties (worn over bike shoes)
- waterproof/water-resistant warm gloves
- lightweight, but warm, cap that fits under helmet (skullcap) or headband that covers ears

### Non-Active Clothing

- clothing & shoes for downtime & restaurants
- lightweight jacket (like fleece) or warm sweater
- warm hat

Backroads provides water bottles & cyclometer or GPS device.

### Optional

- camera & charger (**remember to enter our Guest Photo Contest!**)
- cell phone & charger (consider a battery pack for on-the-go charging)
- helmet and/or saddle (if you prefer your own)
- bike mirror and/or flashing daytime bike lights
- clear glasses/replaceable lenses for rainy days
- sport sandals and/or flip-flops
- notebook/travel journal & pens
- guidebook and/or field guides
- reading material
- earplugs