

Trekking the Historic Mojave Road - California, USA. 2012



Our itineraries may be updated from time to time for operational reasons. Although you will be notified of any significant changes please check this page from time to time prior to travelling for any minor amendments.

This version is dated March 2011



“An Adventure Through Time. Long before the coming of white men, an ancient trade trail spanned the East Mojave Desert”
This trip will explore the history, the wildlife and ways of the first nation peoples that lived in this unique environment

Day 1

You will be met at MacCarran International Airport, Las Vegas by your guides/instructors and will transfer to Nipton, California, about a 2 hour drive. The town is just 2 miles from the Nevada border and was founded in 1904 and its motto is “where the past is present” which is especially appropriate when the midnight freight train rumbles through. We will stay at the town’s Nippeno campsite and enjoy a traditional American evening meal at the nearby Nipton Cantina. Here we will outline the plan for the next 12 days and carry out a safety brief.

Day 2

At first light we will break camp and transfer to intersection of Mojave Road Trail with Route 95 where the trek begins, stopping on route in Searchlight, Nevada for breakfast. Here we will be introduced to our support team who will be responsible for transporting our equipment between camps and re-supplying our food and water. Our route heads west to the distant Piute Hill here we will follow the route of the original Mojave Road as it runs past the ruins of the old disused fort, built in 1867, to Piute Spring. We then continue down through Piute gorge and on to a wild camp at the western rim of the gorge. Distance Approx 11 miles

Day 3

After breakfast we will break camp and head south-west to rejoin the current route of the Road as it heads west through Lanfair Valley with groves of Joshua Tree and Mojave Yucca, this is Great Horned Owl country and they can occasionally be seen roosting in the branches of the Joshua Trees. We carry on to an intersection with Lower Caruthers Canyon Rd where we will head north for a short distance to set up camp. Distance Approx 15 miles

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Day 4

The route today passes through the Providence Mountains past the historic strategic fresh water supplies at Rock Spring and Government Holes. Our route then heads through Cedar Canyon past Pinto Mountain. The canyon takes its name from the abundant junipers that grow everywhere mixed in with Pinyon Pines. It is here that we will reach the highest point of the Road at 5167 feet. We carry on through Cedar Canyon gradually descending until we reach the intersection with the Death Valley Mine Road which at the turn of the last century was a major thoroughfare. Here we will stop to admire the amazing vistas of the East Mojave before turning north for to our camp at the quaintly named “Thomas Place”. Distance Approx 15 miles

Day 5

We continue on the Cedar Canyon Road for another 3 miles down until it crosses both the Union Pacific Railway and the Kelso-Cima road. We will then start climbing again through the Joshua Tree forests with the volcanic Cima Dome rising to our right and follow road to a

stunning camp at base of the Beale Mountains. Distance Approx 11 miles

Day 6

The Road now veers south-west past Marl Springs. This is one of the most important springs along the whole Mojave Road as from here the road descends into the hotter and more barren desert and the next certain water to the west is another 30 miles. After the springs the Road turns north then north-west as we head towards and then skirt around black volcanic Cinder Cone Lava Beds. As we descend the Joshua Trees begin to thin out and the Road gets sandier. We will finally turn off a little way from the Road to Rainy Day Mine campsite. Distance Approx 15 miles

Day 7

Today we will have a rest from trekking and have the opportunity to explore more of this stunning environment. We drive to the stunning 500 foot high Kelso dunes which we will have seen in the distance and spend a few hours here giving the more energetic members of our group a chance to climb to the top of the dunes and hear them

“boom”. We will then move onto the Kelso Depot visitor centre for a chance to learn more about the Mojave National Preserve. After lunch we head back to Baker and there will be a chance to get a well needed shower at a Motel before exploring the town and seeing the tallest thermometer in the world. We will finish the day with a meal at the famous(ish) Mad Greek Restaurant, before returning to Rainy Day Mine campsite.

Day 8

Leaving Rainy Day we will soon cross the Kelbaker Road, and then swing around Seventeen Mile Point so called because it is 17 miles east to the water at Marls Springs and 17 miles west to water at Soda Springs. Soda lake is now visible in the distance. The Joshua Trees have now given way to Creosote and burro-bush although if there has been the right combination of winter rainfall and suitable temperatures you may be fortunate to witness the spectacular desert bloom. We will camp near base of Little Cowhole Mountain. Distance Approx 14 miles.

Day 9

Today we cross the white, caustic surface of Soda Lake. 5 miles of flat, crusty salt which reflects the suns glare and may give way to areas of sticky mud. As we reach the lakes western shore, to the north you can make out Soda Springs, now home to the Californian University Desert Studies Centre. After leaving the lake and passing the Granites we veer left through Mojave River wash to a camp south of road. Distance Approx 12 miles

Day 10

We will head due west to rejoin the



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Road as it sweeps down to meet us across the Mojave River Wash, a 4x4 playground. After a few miles the Road meets up with the Union Pacific Railroad as they are both channelled through Afton Canyon. Here we will walk through the spectacular scenery following the railway for the next 6 miles before eventually it opens out and we cross the Mojave River arriving at the end of the trek and Afton Canyon Campsite. Distance Approx 14 miles.

Day 11

After a bit of a lay in we will leave

the Mojave Road and travel up to Death Valley National Park, 100 miles to the north. We will breakfast on route, and once at Death Valley we will drive up through the southern half of the valley and explore the amazing features that are part of the same Mojave Desert system; Badwater, The Devil's Golf Course, Artist's Palette, and Golden Canyon before arriving at Furnace Creek where we shall stay at one of the town's campsites.

Day 12

After breakfast we will leave Death

Valley via Zabriskie Point and go to Dante's View which gives an amazing view of the whole of Death Valley before returning to the culmination of modern civilization that is Las Vegas. Here we will spend our last night in hotel and partake in a farewell meal before going our separate ways the next day.

Further details and kit list will be provided on booking or upon request.

Included in the cost:

All main meals
Tea/Coffee and some soft drinks
Water
Hotel on the last evening

Not included:

Alcoholic drinks
Snacks
Tips
Flights
Additional accommodation
Personal Travel Insurance

The exact content of this trip is dependant on the situation at the locality at the time and is subject to change at discretion of the instructors. Although every attempt will be made to include the listed content certain circumstances that are beyond our control may necessitate unforeseen changes.

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