

Desert Discovery

Dry weather aficionados will enjoy this 390- mile round trip through desert country. Suggested time: 3 days.



START. LOS ANGELES. Take Interstate 5 north, then State Highway 14 to the...

>> 62 MI. (99 KM.) PALMDALE / LANCASTER. The Antelope Valley is the location of several desert highlights. A stop at the [Mojave Desert Information Center](#) offers maps & brochures about the area. A few miles off State Highway 14 (via State Highway 138) is the [Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve](#) aglow with orange flowers during early spring. Five miles west on Lancaster Road from the preserve is the [Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland SP](#) which protects and preserves an impressive stand of native Joshua Trees. [Saddleback Butte SP](#) is also nearby. Continue on State Highway 14 to...

>> 34 MI. (55 KM.) MOJAVE. Stay on State Highway 14 north, traveling past Mojave, to...

>> 20 MI. (33 KM.) THE RED ROCK-RANDBURG ROAD JUNCTION. The left fork takes you into [Red Rock Canyon State Park](#) where many westerns were filmed and features scenic desert cliffs, buttes and spectacular rock formations. The park is located where the southernmost tip of the Sierra Nevada converge with the El Paso Range. Each tributary canyon is unique, with dramatic shapes and vivid colors. Continue to the junction of State Highways 14 & 178. Take State Highway 178 east to...

>> 38 MI. (61 KM.) RIDGECREST. From Ridgecrest, you can visit many points of interest nearby. Outdoor recreation opportunities include [El Paso Mountains Wilderness](#), [Rademacher Hills Trail](#), and [Spangler Hills Off-Highway Vehicle Area](#). A little farther away are the [Trona Pinnacles](#), [Owens Peak Wilderness](#), [Kiavah Wilderness](#), [Short Canyon](#), and [Sand Canyon](#). From Ridgecrest, take China Lake Blvd south until it joins US 395 and continue south to...

>> 48 MI. (78 KM.) KRAMER JUNCTION. Turn left onto State Highway 58 and continue east to...

>> 21 MI. (34 KM.) HARPER DRY LAKE. Turn left on Harper Dry Lake Road and travel for about six miles then turn to the right on Lockhart Road, a partially-maintained dirt road, and drive two miles to the site. Harper Dry Lake Marsh, located at the edge of one of the largest dry lakebeds in the Mojave Desert, is an important resting site for thousands of migrating birds. Back on State Highway 58, drive east onto Interstate 15 to...

>> 30 MI. (45 KM.) BARSTOW. Founded in 1886 as a railroad depot, Barstow developed into a booming mining town. While in Barstow, you can visit [Rainbow Basin Natural Area](#) 8 miles north off Irwin Road. Many visitors come to see exciting multi-colored rock formations and walk the scenic canyons. Another popular destination is [Stoddard Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area](#) a diverse landscape for off-highway vehicle recreation. It is characterized by steep rocky mountains, rolling hills, open valleys, and winding sandy washes. Continue north on Interstate 15 to...

>> 12 MI. (16 KM.) CALICO GHOST TOWN. A silver mining town in the 1880s, Walter Knott, of Knott's Berry Farm fame, acquired the old town and restored the remaining buildings. The town includes a mercantile store, train rides, mine tour, and museums. Nearby is the [Calico Early Man Site](#), possibly the earliest known place where human artifacts have been found in North America. Return to Interstate 15, and go south over Cajon Pass to Interstate 10 west, and return to...

>> 125 MI. (200 KM.) LOS ANGELES.