

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Death Valley's Spectacular Desert Landscape March 2026

- Dates:** Orientation meeting Saturday, March 21, 2026. Riding Sunday, March 22 – Friday, March 27, with departure on Saturday, March 28 (lodging final night included).
- Leaders:** Kevin Schmidt, Roger Sass; **SAGs:** Mayoma Pendergast, Kathleen Schindler
- Miles:** Approximately 330 miles with up to 20,000 feet of elevation gain
- Rating:** Intermediate-Advanced
<https://www.heartcycle.org/tour-ratings>
- Riders:** 20
- Price:** \$2,700 (double occupancy). \$650 due at registration. Balance is due by December 21, 2025. Single supplement \$4,000.
- Cancellation:** [Standard cancellation policy](#)

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

OVERVIEW

Death Valley, the name alone is intimidating. The hottest, driest, and lowest national park within the United States, it is also the largest in the “Lower 48.” A land of weather extremes, Native and mining history, well-exposed geology, and diverse ecosystems—this desert paradise is breathtakingly beautiful.

We offer an intimate, 6-day, semi-fixed base tour through California's Death Valley National Park staying 5 nights at the Oasis in Furnace Creek and 2 nights in Shoshone, a place with a rich history as a railroad town and mining district.



The tour alternates between relaxed, flatter routes and more challenging climbs. We have options for those who may want to ride more miles and for those who may want to ride less—see the detailed itinerary below.

The temperatures tend to be relatively mild and inviting in the springtime. Daytimes should be generally warm, dry, and mild with temperatures in the upper 70s to the low 80s. Expect nights to be cool and clear with temps in the 40s to 50s. We expect perfect weather for a great early-season warm-up tour!

Located far from urban areas, the area is designated as a Certified IDA International Dark Sky Place. We can expect stellar stargazing with our tour starting just a couple of days after a new moon. Geological highlights are numerous and will be discussed during HeartCycle happy hours and meetings to add context to what we see on our rides.

Join us for this spring bike tour through an inspiring landscape with captivating views, colorful geology, hopefully spring flowers, and quiet roads.



TRAVEL & LODGING

Participants are expected to arrange their own transportation to Furnace Creek, California, for the first phase of the tour. Free parking is available for the duration. For those flying to Las Vegas Harry Reid International Airport, rental cars are available for the 150-mile, ~2-hour drive to our base in Furnace Creek. We stay at the *Oasis at Death Valley*, which recently underwent a \$200 million renovation and was featured in Sunset Magazine. The Oasis features a real golf course (not just salt flats), pools, and numerous food options.

<https://www.oasisatdeathvalley.com/>

For the second phase of the tour, we will take over the Shoshone Inn, an independent hotel at the southern edge of Death Valley. Quaint with loads of charm, they also have a hot mineral springs pool. The Crowbar Cafe and Saloon will provide provisions.

<https://www.shoshonevillage.com/death-valley-lodging-shoshone-inn/>

ITINERARY

Day 1: Sunday, March 22, 2026

Furnace Creek to Artists Drive and Badwater and return

49 miles and 2680 feet of elevation gain

A generally flat day in the heart of Death Valley touring a series of pastel-colored hills along the 9-mile, one-way road: Artists Drive. Much of the elevation gain is in the first 7 miles. The full-day option includes an out-and-back trek through the salt flats of Devils Golf Course to Badwater Basin, the lowest point in North America at 282 feet *below* sea level. A shorter 24-mile and 2300-ft day is an option with a possible tour of Scotty's Castle.



Day 2: Monday, March 23
Furnace Creek to Dantes View and return

51 miles and 5700 feet of elevation gain

We travel south past the golden badlands and sculpted ridges of Zabriskie Point to Dantes View Road.

The 13.2-mile section from CA-190 has an average gradient of 5%; the final

quarter mile tips up to 13%! The exquisite panoramic views are worth every pedal stroke when we look back down on our Day 1 route and Badwater from our perch in the Black Mountains. Our return is almost entirely downhill.



Day 3: Tuesday, March 24

Jimmy's Death Valley Cruise

61 miles and 3255 feet of elevation gain

We venture westward and a first stop could be the Visitor Center. Then there's the Harmony

Borax Works Interpretive Trail, Devil's Cornfield, and the Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes , all before our morning SAG stop at the sand dunes of Stovepipe Wells. You may opt for an 11-mile shortcut to avoid some climbing by proceeding on CA-190 and not turning left on Scotty's Castle Road.

Day 4: Wednesday, March 25
Furnace Creek to Shoshone via Ashford Junction

73 miles and 5200 feet of elevation gain

Revisiting our route past the lowest point in the U.S., Badwater, we pedal next to the Amargosa River to southern Death Valley. At mile 45, the fun begins with the route up to Jubilee and Salsbury Passes, with gradients averaging 5.0 and 5.2%, respectively. Traffic will be very light with impressive scenery.



Day 5: Thursday, March 26

Shoshone to Tecopa Hot Springs and China Ranch and return

32 miles and 1444 feet of elevation gain

Today provides several options. The full route heads south on Highway 127 to the Old Spanish Trail to Tecopa and the China Ranch Date Farm, a family-owned, hidden gem. Bring your walking shoes and a thirst for a refreshing date shake! From China Ranch, Amargosa Canyon Trail is a 3-mile loop through the valley along Willow Creek. Be forewarned, miles 16 to 18 are steep gravel (5-10%). Down, then up (miles 18-20)! Hence, the recommendation for wider tires. For those looking for a shorter option, it's only a 16-mile (350 ft) round trip to the therapeutic Tecopa Hot Springs. Another possible option is to visit the springs of Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

Day 6: Friday, March 27

Shoshone to Furnace Creek via Evelyn

60 miles and 3575 feet of elevation gain

Heading north toward Eagle Mountain, we have an easy 27 miles and 800 feet of climbing before lunch at Death Valley Junction. The last 20 miles are all downhill past the wildly eroded and colorful badlands of Zabriskie Point... you may



even hear the Pink Floyd soundtrack to the eponymous movie. To end the ride, we return to the Oasis for our last night (included in tour cost).



Day 7: Saturday, March 28

Departure day. Safe travels!

SPECIAL NOTES:

- Be prepared for wide temperature ranges from morning to afternoon. Wind or even rain(!) are a possibility.
- Wide tires (28-mm or wider) are recommended for comfort and the 4 miles of steep gravel to and from the China Ranch Date Farm.
- We will have a scrumptious group dinner at the Furnace Creek Inn on the evening of day 2 or 3.
- For those traveling from the Denver metro area, the Sprinter will be available to transport bicycles (\$150 roundtrip). A lottery may be needed if demand exceeds available space.
- Electric bicycles, please read the e-bike restrictions and guidelines on the HeartCycle website → Selecting a Tour and E-bike guidelines: <https://www.heartcycle.org/selecting-a-tour>.

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