



DESERT ADVENTURES

Popular Sightseeing Tours

- **Indian Cultural Tour (4 hours) – *A Desert Adventures Exclusive!*** The Indian Cultural Adventure offers a fascinating look into the lives of the Cahuilla Indians as you learn about the customs, ceremonies, and everyday lives of these hunter/gatherers. Stroll through a lush natural palm oasis where you will learn why the Cahuilla chose to live on the San Andreas Fault and how they used the desert plants for food and medicinal purposes. Then visit the registered archeological site of the ancient Cahuilla village of Palteewet. Tour the historically accurate recreated village and see a depiction of the water manipulation practiced by the tribe, fish traps, dead-fall traps [used for hunting small animals], and authentic metates [grinding stones]. A ceremonial house and kishes [huts] filled with Indian artifacts and interpretive displays showcase the foods, weapons, and tools of the Cahuilla. You can even learn about archeology as you *participate in the Palteewet Archeological Dig!*

Optional Hike: Easy Oasis Hike

Admission: \$10.00 Adult / \$8.00 Child

- **Pioneer History Tour (4 hours) - *A Desert Adventures Exclusive!*** Step back in time and learn how and why early pioneers migrated to the hottest, driest desert in North America. Your mesmerizing journey begins in the Old West with a visit to a replica Mining Camp which depicts the harsh life of the early prospectors and gold miners. Here you will learn how they coped with the extreme climate, primitive living conditions, and the back-breaking business of prospecting, mining, and extracting gold from ore. *Pan for gold* like the miners did in the late 1800's then tour the Camp which features a gold mine exhibit, telegraph office, stage coach office, mercantile, assay office, and town jail. From the Mining Camp, a short nature walk brings you to a pioneer homestead where you will learn how early pioneers survived in the arid climate of the Coachella Valley. As you tour the homestead, your guide will explain how the Homestead Act of 1862 opened up the West with the promise of cheap or even free land.

Optional Hike: Easy to Moderate Slot Canyon Hike

Admission: \$10.00 Adult / \$8.00 Child

- **San Andreas Fault / Geology Hike (4 Hours) - *A Desert Adventures Exclusive!*** Explore a “desert badlands” and the strange and eerie world of the San Andreas Fault. You will be thoroughly entertained and enthralled as your expert naturalist guide brings the desert and its geology and history to life. On your adventure you will visit a natural palm oasis where you can peer into a large crevice in the earth with water bubbling up out of the desert. Here you will learn how the Cahuilla Indians made their home along the fault line. You will also hike back into spectacular steep-walled canyons where you will see twisted and tormented landscapes, warped and bent by the powerful movement of the Earth’s crust. Learn how tectonic forces created the slanted, vertical and wave-like structures that have been described as the most tortured landscape on earth. The truly adventurous can climb from the bowls to the crest of the fault line to enjoy spectacular views of the Coachella Valley. (**Note:** The recommended minimum age for children on this tour is 12 years).

Hike Difficulty: Moderate Slot Canyon Hike

Admission: \$10.00 Adult / \$8.00 Child



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- **Windmill Tour (3 hours)** - The thousands of windmills dotting the foothills of the fabled San Geronio Pass are familiar sights to freeway travelers and airline passengers and have been featured in major movies like "The Rain Man" with Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise. These windmills tower over the desert, with their huge wind turbine blades silently rotating overhead. Their massive rotors have a sweep half the length of a football field. On this tour, you will learn the history of wind energy, current utilization of wind power, its ecological impact, and look at the future of wind energy. The San Geronio Pass wind resource area, along with two other nearby wind energy areas, account for nearly 95 percent of all commercial wind power generation in California and approximately 11 percent of the world's wind-generated electricity.

Optional Hike: None

Admission: None

- **Palm Springs Aerial Tram (4 hours)** - Soar from the warm desert floor to the alpine Mountain station at 8,516 feet in approximately fourteen breathtaking minutes. The state-of-the art tramcars from Switzerland are some of the largest in the World, offering a large viewing area and featuring an innovative rotating floor design that provides a 360-degree viewing experience that you will not soon forget! At the top of Mount San Jacinto, your guide will point out interesting landmarks from the overlook area that stretch all the way to Mexico! For guests who want to hike, trails range from the awe-inspiring five and one-half mile trek to the 10,834 foot peak of San Jacinto to the just over one mile nature walk through picturesque Long Valley, located just behind the Tram's Mountain Station. (Note: The incline from the Mountain Station to the valley floor is fairly steep and may not be accessible for all guests. For guests who choose not to hike, there is a wonderful 22 minute film on the history of the Aerial Tram plus restaurants and plenty of space to sit and enjoy the spectacular view).

Optional Hike: Moderate Alpine Hike

Admission: \$22.25 Adult / \$15.25 Child

- **Palm Springs Indian Canyons (4 hours)** - Visit the beautiful and serene Indian Canyons and enjoy lush palm oases, running streams, spectacular wildflower displays in the springtime, and an abundance of animal and bird life. The canyons and associated areas are sacred to the Cahuilla Indians and are historically important to scientists and nature lovers. Footpaths wind down into the canyon, and your experienced naturalist guide will share interesting facts about the Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians - who developed complex communities in these lush oases abundant with water, plants, and animals. Traces of their communities, where crops were cultivated, animals were hunted, and plants and seeds were gathered for food and medicine still exist and you will see petroglyphs, metates (grinding holes), house pits and foundations, irrigation ditches, dams, reservoirs, and trails.

Optional Hike: Easy - Andreas Canyon Hike

Admission: \$8.00 Adult / \$4.00 Child



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- **Coachella Valley Preserve (4 hours)** - The Coachella Valley Preserve is home of the spectacular Thousand Palms Oasis which is fed by water seeping out of the San Andreas Fault. Located in the center of the preserve is the Paul Wilhelm Grove, which is also the location of the Visitor's Center. Descending into grotto-like coolness, the sudden air-conditioned feeling you will experience is not just from the shade of the fan palms. Like an evaporative cooler, their huge leaves and dozens of other plants' leaves transpire water during the day. Within the heart of the oasis, it is 10-20 degrees cooler than in the desert outside – making this a great location for summertime visitors. You will stroll through hundreds of Washingtonian Palms, whose shaggy skirts hide creatures from the glaring sun. Pupfish swim in quiet pools. Emerald grass drifts in the wind playing a haunting, ancient song. Lounging, fringe-toed lizards burrow into their favorite sand dunes. Life is cool and easy at this oasis straddling the infamous San Andreas Fault zone and the Indio Hills.

Optional Hike: Easy to Moderate Oasis Hike

Admission: Donation Appreciated

- **Joshua Tree National Park (5 hours)** - Travel through the high desert, home to over 25 different animals, several Indian tribes, gold miners, cattle ranchers and rustlers. This beautiful area holds a fistful of American history, plus it encompasses some of the most interesting geological displays found anywhere in the World. Travel through two deserts and the transition zone between two ecosystems. Below 3,000 feet, the Colorado Desert encompasses the eastern part of the park and features natural gardens of creosote bush, ocotillo, and cholla cactus. The higher, moister, and slightly cooler Mojave Desert is the special habitat of the Joshua tree. The western part of the park includes some of the most interesting geologic displays found in California's deserts. The rugged mountains of twisted rock and exposed granite monoliths testify to the tremendous earth forces that shaped and formed California's Wild West. Don't forget your camera, as you will want to take pictures of the gigantic boulders, Joshua trees, yuccas, and other lush plant life that thrive in this area.

Optional Hike: Easy to Moderate

Admission: \$15.00 per car (Free for guests with a National Park Pass or Golden Eagle Passport)

- **Salton Sea (5 hours)** - Enjoy a day of exploration along the shores of the Salton Sea, host to some of the most amazing man made and natural wonders in Southern California. Your adventure begins with a trip through the heart of the Coachella Valley agricultural district, where you will be amazed by the volume of produce being harvested. Along the way you will stop at a date gardens where you can sample a variety of dates, purchase dates to take home as souvenirs, or even try a date shake. Then it's on to the Salton Sea, the largest body of water in the State of California, and an accidental man-made wonder. The Salton Sea is host to over 456 species of birds and water fowl that either migrate or live here year-round. At the Salton Sea State Recreational Area Visitor's Center, you can peruse the museum, watch a video presentation by the park rangers on the creation of the Salton Sea, and then join your guide on a nature walk through the Native Plant Gardens. This is a great location for a picnic lunch stop. On the return, you will pass through the Waterfowl Wildlife Sanctuary and enjoy unparalleled 360 degree views of the Santa Rosa, Orocochia, and Chocolate Mountains.

Optional Hike: Easy Flora & Fauna Hike

Admission Fee: \$6 per car



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- **Coachella Valley Agriculture Tour (4 hours)** – This adventure takes you through the heart of the Coachella Valley’s agricultural district, East of Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. The Coachella valley is the primary date-growing region in the United States, responsible for nearly 95 percent of the nation’s crop. Other agricultural products cultivated in the Coachella valley include fruits and vegetables, especially table grapes, citrus fruits and peppers along with avocados, artichokes, beans, carrots, corn, cotton, grains (barley, oats and wheat plus rice fields kept wet or moist in the Salton Sea area), lettuce, peaches, persimmons, plums and prunes, spinach, strawberries, mangoes, tomatoes and other vegetable crops. The Coachella and Imperial valley’s agricultural miracle is in due part to irrigation, an underground aquifer from the era when the valley was under a fresh water lake in the last ice age (over 10,000 years ago), and the All-American Canal completed in the late 1940s brought large supplies of water from the Colorado River. Recent growth of fish farming or "aquaculture" in Mecca near the Salton Sea brings new promise to the local economy, especially in efforts to restore the ailing ecology of the large saltwater lake. This tour includes a stop at a date gardens where you can sample a variety of dates, purchase dates to take home as souvenirs, or try a date shake.

Optional Hike: None

Admission Fee: None

- **[Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument](#) and [Idyllwild](#) (6 hours)** - The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument was established by an Act of Congress on October 24, 2000 “in order to preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and to secure now and for future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife, land forms, and natural and cultural resources in these mountains and to recreate therein”. A short drive up Highway 74 brings you to the Monument’s Visitors Center which features exhibits on desert wildlife and cultural history. While there, you will enjoy a short guided nature walk and enjoy incredible vistas. Then you will continue along the Pines to Palms Scenic Byway to the Idyllwild Nature Center which shares the magnificence of the San Jacinto Mountains with visitors of all ages. The Center offers over five miles of hiking trails that wind past stunning vistas in every direction. This is a great location for a picnic lunch stop or optional hike. Then it’s on to the scenic town of Idyllwild. Set among tall pines, sweet smelling cedars and legendary rocks. The town has kept its "small town" atmosphere and you will have time explore the local shops and galleries, or enjoy a quick lunch, before heading back to the desert.

Optional Hike: Easy to Moderate Alpine Hike

Admission Fee: \$2.00 Adult / \$1.00 Child



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Other Recommended Hiking Tours

MODERATE HIKES

- ["Bump & Grind" Trail](#) – Admission: None
Length: 2 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 1,000 feet **Recommended Length:** 4 hrs
- [Palm Springs Museum Trail](#) – Admission: None
Length: 1.5 to 2 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 900 feet **Recommended Length:** 4 hrs
- [Painted Canyon & Ladder Hike](#) – Admission: None
Length: 3-5 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 500 - 900 feet **Recommended Length:** 5 hrs
- [Bear Creek Canyon](#) – Admission: None
Length: 4.5 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 900 feet **Recommended Length:** 5 hrs
- [Murray Canyon](#) (Palm Springs Indian Canyon) – \$8.00 Adult / \$4.00 Child
Length: 6 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 500 feet **Recommended Length:** 6 hrs
- [Araby Trail](#) – Admission: None
Length: 6 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 800 feet **Recommended Length:** 6 hrs

STRENUOUS HIKES

- [Maynard Mine Trail](#) – Admission: \$8.00 Adult / \$4.00 Child
Length: 7 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 2,200 feet **Recommended Length:** 6 hrs
- [Clara Burgess Trail / Murray Hill](#) – Admission: None
Length: 6-10 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 1,400 feet **Recommended Length:** 6 hrs
- [Bear Creek Canyon](#) – Admission: None
Length: 8 miles in/out **Elevation Gain:** 2,000 feet **Recommended Length:** 6 hrs

These suggested times are from/to your hotel. We recommend having your guide meet you at your hotel so he/she has a chance to get to know you and your preferences a little before you depart on your hike. That way the hike can be customized based on your ability and interests. However, shorter tours are available if you meet your guide at the trailhead and leave/return from there.