

DOUGLASS HOUSE REOPENS
The Washington, D.C., home of abolitionist Frederick Douglass is open again for tours after a \$2 million renovation. T6

TRAVEL



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SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2007

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC TRAVEL.AZCENTRAL.COM

SECTION T

GOOD DEALS

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Fly into Vail/Eagle County Airport in Colorado and get your first day of skiing free. Bring your same-day airline boarding pass and Vail Valley lodging confirmation to any ticket window at Vail or Beaver Creek and get a lift ticket good for the rest of the day. Single-day lift tickets cost \$85 at both resorts through April 15. (Vail will be open through April 22; lift tickets drop to \$49 after April 15.)

Details: 1-800-842-8062 or www.snow.com.

'Spring for Summer'

Divi Resorts, with eight Caribbean properties in the U.S., Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, Barbados, Bonaire and Aruba, has a "Spring for Summer" deal, with discounts of about 35 percent on stays of three or more nights. The deal is good for stays April 16-Aug. 31. Book by March 30.

Details: 1-800-367-3484 or www.divi resorts.com.

Holidays: Kids sail free

Kids sail free on MSC Cruises' seven-night Christmas and New Year's Caribbean sailings. The deal applies to two children age 17 or younger sharing a stateroom with two adults. Rates for adults start at about \$869 per person, double occupancy, for the Dec. 21 cruise aboard the MSC Lirica, and \$1,069 for the Dec. 28 cruise. Both sailings depart from Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Book by April 30.

Details: 1-800-666-9333 or www.msccruises.com.

Spend week in Austria

Spend a week in Innsbruck, Austria, with a deal from Nordique Tours. For Thursday departures in April, the price is \$1,594 per person, double occupancy (including taxes and fuel surcharges). The package includes round-trip airfare from Denver and seven nights' lodging at the Hotel Europa Tyrol, including breakfasts.

Details: 1-800-995-7997 or www.nordique tours.com.

— Washington Post



WWW.AUSTRIA-TRIPS.COM/INNSBRUCK/INNSBRUCK1HTM
Maria Theresa Street in Innsbruck, one of Europe's most beautiful cities.

COMING FRIDAY

Hohokam history

Pueblo Grande Museum in Phoenix shows visitors what the Valley was like when the Hohokam people lived here 1,500 years ago. **In Explore Arizona**

COMING SUNDAY

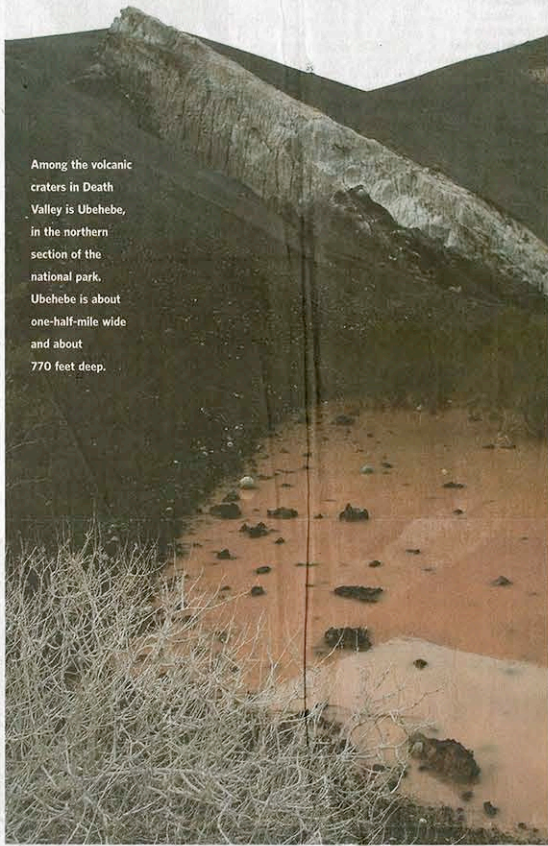
Mexico for all

Whether you like beaches, resorts, ruins, big cities or little-known towns, you'll find inspiration in this special section about Mexico. **In Travel**

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Among the volcanic craters in Death Valley is Ubehebe, in the northern section of the national park. Ubehebe is about one-half-mile wide and about 770 feet deep.

Death Valley's COOL side

November to April, the stark beauty and solitude are exhilarating

STORY AND PHOTO BY CHRIS RYAN
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC
MAP BY JO ANNE IZUMI | THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, Calif.

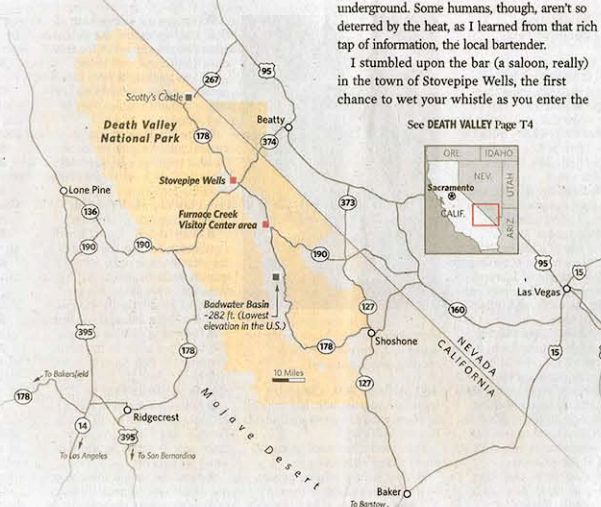
A parched landscape bakes under the heat of a merciless sun. An unlucky motorist stands by an overheated car on the side of a shimmering desert road.

Death Valley — the national park, established in 1933, covers almost 3,000 square miles and stretches into southern Nevada — brings such scenes to mind, but there's another Death Valley, one not about heat and survival but about exploring one of the country's most stark and stunning landscapes without courting sunstroke: It's Death Valley in winter and spring.

In summer, Death Valley earns its forbidding name with temperatures topping 125 degrees. (In 1913, a temperature of 134 degrees was recorded in the area.) Even the wildlife can't bear the heat; kangaroo rats and sidewinders pass the day underground. Some humans, though, aren't so deterred by the heat, as I learned from that rich tap of information, the local bartender.

I stumbled upon the bar (a saloon, really) in the town of Stovepipe Wells, the first chance to wet your whistle as you enter the

See DEATH VALLEY Page T4



ARIZONA TRIP

A different getaway: Magical Jerome's a delight to call home

Story and photo by Nancy Clark-Puffer
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

JEROME — Sparkly crystals and funky, historic knickknacks fill Andrea Prince's home, also known as the Surgeon's House Bed & Breakfast.

The faint aromas of incense and sage remind you you're in a place where everything from spirituality to art is celebrated a bit differently. The lush garden, the dining room and the north-facing guest rooms are graced with a sweeping view of the Verde Valley, where the lights of the cities below twinkle at night and the red rocks of Sedona can be seen by day. The historic house, 100 Hill St., oozes charm.

This is what makes Jerome a popular place for people looking for something more authentic than what you'd get on a typical touristy day trip.

"We aren't all just shops and tourists," Prince said. "There is also a dimension of Jerome that is simply magical. It offers a change in topography, geography, altitude, attitude, everything... being here overnight lets you feel like you are actually looking down at the 'other world' and that this one is the 'real' world even if just for an overnight or

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The Surgeon's House B & B has four distinctive guest rooms, three with sweeping views of the Verde Valley and red rocks of Sedona.



A 380-foot-long, 85-foot-high atrium at BCE Place, in the financial district, links to the PATH, a series of underground walkways.

Cold keeps people 'down' in Toronto

Story and photo by Andrea Sachs
WASHINGTON POST

TORONTO — You'd have to be crazy to tour wintry Toronto without a coat.

But for two days, forgoing fresh air, traffic and outerwear, I moved into Toronto's subterranean city. The 16.7-mile stretch of walkways, called the PATH, lies below the downtown financial district. Sticking to the netherworld and its adjoining street-level atriums and skywalks, I was able to shop, eat and even sleep without losing feeling in my face.

"It's really a world underground," says Sousie Tsotskos, a spokeswoman for Tourism Toronto. "Some people go to work, go out to eat, go shopping, go to the cinema, see a hockey game — and never have to go outside."

Toronto residents have good reason to stay indoors. In February, the city's average temperature is 23 degrees; in March, it jumps all the way to 32.

Toronto's first pedestrian tunnel was created in 1900, when the department store T. Eaton Co. connected three of its properties. In 1917, five pathways were added. Ten years later, the Royal York Hotel (now the Fairmont Royal York) and Union Station were linked, allowing

See PATH Page T8

Enjoy hospitable Death Valley during winter and spring

DEATH VALLEY

Continued from T1

park from the west. A true one-horse town, Stovepipe is little more than a motel, restaurant, campground and gas station. As I nursed a cheap whiskey, the barman revealed how popular Death Valley's inhospitability is, particularly for visitors from Europe. Many summer guests, he said, come for the novelty of experiencing the hottest part of the continent at the hottest time of year.

But the other Death Valley emerges around November, when the heat chasers have checked out, the adventure writers have moved on, and daytime highs have dropped to more humane levels.

Lowest golf course

Driving toward the park on a damp November night, it was difficult to imagine the heat that makes the place so infamous. Snow fell wet against my windshield and each pass of the wipers revealed a snowier landscape in the beams of my headlights. I was crossing the Panamint Range, the barrier that in 1849 hindered the exit of a band of gold seekers, the '49ers. Their experiences inspired the valley's hopeless name. (Stories from that period tell of only one death in Death Valley itself, but the hardships experienced led many to believe they would die there.)

Just minutes later — and 5,000 feet lower — rain bathed my car as I sped through the valley on a dead straight road. I had arrived at Stovepipe Wells, melted snow dripping from the wheel wells of my truck. The town seemed empty; the RV park sprawled like an abandoned drive-in theater.

Altitude zero, temperature

55 degrees. This was hospitable Death Valley.

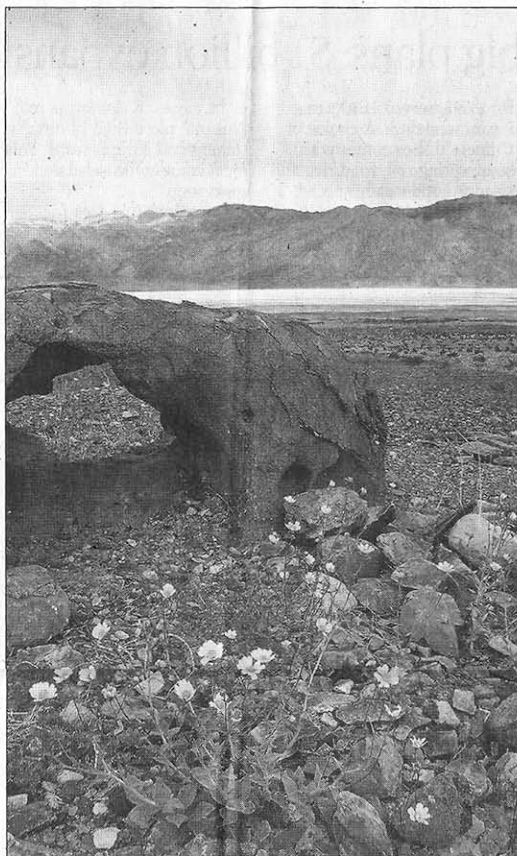
A few miles beyond Stovepipe (and about 200 feet below sea level) lies Furnace Creek, the center of human activity in the park. Guests can choose camp or RV sites, a motel, an upscale inn — or, like me, can venture into the backcountry. But first, you can learn about moving rocks, roadrunners and '49ers at the visitor center, take in some history at the Borax Museum, or swing some iron at what is billed as "the world's lowest golf course" (18 holes, 214 feet below sea level).

If getting away from civilization is your goal, you have your choice of nine campgrounds spread throughout the park, as well as the sprawling backcountry. I opted for a cross between wilderness and convenience by accessing the backcountry with my four-wheel drive. Numerous canyons extend west up into the Panamints, and once you're a few miles from the main road, you're free to camp nearly anywhere.

11,000-foot peaks

At the visitor center I bought a good topo map and picked a side valley, Hanupah Canyon, that the ranger predicted I would have to myself. For the next hour, I drove along the lowest stretch of Earth in the Western Hemisphere, nearly 300 feet below sea level. A flat sea of salt and cracked earth spread for miles around, and the mountains seemed to float on top of wavy lakes created by mirage.

After turning off the valley road, there were still several miles of rising terrain before the mouth of the canyon. I was driving up a vast alluvial fan, a scree field five miles long and nearly 2,000 feet high, the rocky deposits from



CHRIS RYAN/SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

Much of the 3.3 million-acre park's beauty, including unusual rock formations, dramatic canyons and spectacular views, isn't near the roads.

centuries of rain, erosion and gravity.

When I reached the top I got out and turned around. Only here, looking out over the orange-pink valley, far from the campgrounds and RVs, did I notice the haunting whistle of the open wind and feel the heady exhilaration of space and solitude.

Temporary intrusion

I climbed back in and descended the rugged trail into the dry riverbed. For the next three days, it would be mine — nearly. I pitched a tent and spent the mild daylight hours exploring the canyon and hillsides, photographing landscapes and enjoying the solitude. It was the perfect antidote to the winter blues.

The spell was broken the

next afternoon when a pair of dirt bikes whined up the road below my camp. But once the bikers could go no farther they turned around and sped out, leaving me once again with a canyon all my own.

Whether you pick your own canyon or your own campsite, Death Valley's stark beauty will lure you and its cooler months will entice you to explore it by foot.

Your gaze drops from snowcapped peaks as high as 11,000 feet (Telescope Peak is 11,049 feet) to 200 feet below sea level in a single glance. Wave upon wave of sand dunes catch the clear light. On the eastern side of the valley, a short drive takes you to hills that seem spattered with paint spilled by giants. But this is no illusion. The

Death Valley National Park

GETTING THERE: It's about 420 miles to Death Valley National Park from central Phoenix. Take Interstate 17 north to Arizona 74 (Carefree Highway). Go west to U.S. 60, then north to Wickenburg. In Wickenburg, take U.S. 93 north to Interstate 40. Go west to Kingman, then north on U.S. 93 to Las Vegas. In Las Vegas, take U.S. 95 north to Beatty, Nev. At Beatty, take Nevada 374 west to the park.

WHEN TO GO: The cool season is between November and April.

ADMISSION: \$20 per vehicle or \$10 per individual on foot, motorcycle or bicycle, good for seven days.

VISITOR CENTER: The Furnace Creek Visitor Center, open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. daily, is the primary information center. It has exhibits and a bookstore, and visitors can learn about sights, activities and road conditions.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Camping: There are nine public campgrounds in the park. Some are open all year; some close seasonally. Amenities vary; not all campgrounds have water and not all are suitable for RVs. Fees range from free to \$18 per night. All campgrounds are first-come, first-served except Furnace Creek, where spots

may be reserved. Call 1-877-444-6777 or go to www.recreation.gov. Two private campgrounds have RV hookups and showers. For campground specifics, go to www.nps.gov/deva.

Furnace Creek Inn & Ranch Resort

The resort includes two hotels, the 66-room Furnace Creek Inn and the more casual, 224-room Furnace Creek Ranch. Amenities include a golf course, four restaurants, a saloon, a cocktail lounge, shops, swimming pools, tennis courts, horseback riding, horse-drawn carriage rides, a playground and massage therapy. The inn (1-760-786-2345) is open from mid-October to mid-May. The ranch (1-760-786-2345) is open year-round. Web site for both: www.furnacecreekresort.com.

SERVICES: Motels, restaurants, camper stores, dump stations and auto services are available in Furnace Creek, Stovepipe Wells Village, Panamint Springs and in the towns adjacent to the park.

DRIVING: There are more than 300 miles of paved roads, 300 miles of improved dirt roads and several hundred miles of unmaintained dirt roads.

DETAILS: 1-(760)-786-3200 or www.nps.gov/deva.

Valley's beauty lies away from its roads. Numerous hikes take you through dramatic canyons, past dark, volcanic craters, and to spectacular views of the valley and its surrounding peaks.

Triple digits in May

One of the best spots to see them is Zabriskie Point, a Martian landscape of multicolored, dramatically eroded badlands. In summer, you'd need an air-conditioned spacesuit to walk around for long. But this time of year, you can comfortably inhale the mild desert air and take your time strolling the trails or awaiting the perfect photograph.

You can reach these sites by car, but much of Death

Of course, you can do some of these things any time of year. But to get out of your car and close to Death Valley's extreme beauty and solitude, you need to go between November and April. Take your time wandering the sand dunes, exploring the exotic landscape or basking in the desert solitude.

But don't linger too long. Come May, temperatures will return to triple digits and Death Valley's temporary hospitality will quickly dissolve into shimmering waves of heat.