



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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Yucca Valley, 92284

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND ETHNOBOTANY OF THE CALIFORNIA DESERTS

FIELD CLASS / FALL 2023

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Learn about the abundantly diverse ecosystem of the California desert from an Indigenous perspective. Participants will be introduced to cultural landscapes, ethnobotany, and use of natural resources by Indigenous peoples, and the ways Indigenous people incorporate the environment into all aspects of their daily lives. We will discuss medicinal and ceremonial use of plants, cultural landscapes and suggested conduct therein, Indigenous people's role in desert ecosystems both traditionally and currently, and the importance of knowing the complex history of the lands we all call home. We'll spend some time in the classroom before we head over to a nearby cultural site where we will be able to see plants and animals. Participants will leave the course with actionable ways to protect the desert and steward the land.

MEETING LOCATION

[Joshua Tree National Park Association](#), 55922 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley, CA 92284

DATE and TIME

Friday, November 17th, 8a to 1p

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: EASY

The hike will not exceed two miles. Terrain will be rocky, sandy, and possibly uneven, but with less than 100 feet elevation gain/loss. Please contact us if you have questions about accommodations or your ability to participate.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

None

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Binoculars (for use during field excursion, not to keep!)
- Plant samples
- Native art samples (ollas, baskets, mesquite, seed-beaters)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth Paige

Elizabeth Paige is a Desert naturalist and a member of the Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians. She has worked with organizations such as the Mojave Desert Land Trust, Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, and Cactus to Clouds Foundation, and also served as a cohort on the 2021 Desert Keepers Council for the National Parks Conservation Association. She is dedicated to cultural preservation, and the advancement of indigenous people working in science and conservation. She is currently the Education and Stewardship Program manager for the Native American Land Conservancy.

A note from Elizabeth:

Miyaxwen omun emum! (Hello everyone!) I'm Elizabeth, an Indigenous naturalist and conservationist. I am dedicated to cultural preservation, traditional land management and the advancement of Indigenous people working in science and conservation. At heart, I believe that as Indigenous people, our ancient, unique, and sustainable relationships to our environment can guide climate change initiatives that will make a difference, protect threatened and endangered plants and animals, and strengthen the larger world community by reconnecting folks to the natural world.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll begin in the classroom with a lecture on botany, animals, and Cultural awareness, and then car caravan to a nearby cultural site where we'll hike and see plants that have been covered during the course.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

This course ends in a different location from where it begins. Participants will car caravan after the classroom lecture to a cultural site (outdoors), and are responsible for their own transportation. Please make sure you check the weather ahead of time and dress accordingly. **All participants must complete the [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) at least one day ahead of the program.**

WHAT TO BRING

The essentials for all field courses

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field, for the duration of your course
- Close-toed athletic shoes or hiking boots; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day
- Notebook and pencil are always good to have

Recommended

- Binoculars to spot wildlife

FAQ

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Please call our main line: 760-819-4714 and if no one answers, please call the Desert Institute coordinator, Benny Lopez: 949-241-9693.

For classes meeting in the park, please take into consideration the time it will take to go through the entrance gate—on weekends after 9am, you may wait up to 45 minutes! (15-20 minutes is typical.) For afternoon activities, you will also want to allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. **There is no cell service in the park**, so please plan accordingly!

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified 14 days in advance. If we are notified less than 14 days in advance, we are unable to process refunds for any reason. (But we would like you to notify us if you are unable to attend.)

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful. If we do not meet our minimum of 4 registered participants for any given activity, we will cancel the activity with 48+ hours notice. We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

ARE THERE ANY THINGS I NEED TO DO TO PREPARE?

All participants must return the completed [health questionnaire and signed waiver](#) before the day of their activity. **Failure to do so will cancel your registration.** If your course enters Joshua Tree National Park, you must **download or print your park pass** ahead of the class, or you will pay the entrance fee at the gate, which is currently \$35 per vehicle.

CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities unless noted in the activity description. If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) meets the age requirements. As much as we love our pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.