



**DESERT INSTITUTE**  
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL  
PARK ASSOCIATION

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# HIKING 101: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO START WALKING IN THE WILDERNESS

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Hiking is one of the most rewarding and fuss-free ways to experience the outdoors. But it can be intimidating to start, as there aren't a lot of amenities once you get on the trail, and the media can be narrow-minded in how hikers are portrayed. If you're feeling that tug to get outside and try hiking, but you're feeling uneasy, join this short seminar to learn the basics and build your confidence. You'll learn what to pack in your bag, how to dress (and no, it doesn't have to be the latest high-tech-ultra-light-weight UV shirt), and how to begin interpreting maps and choosing trails. We'll give you the tools you'll need to prepare and stay safe while out on the trail!

## MEETING LOCATION

[Black Rock Nature Center](#), 9800 Black Rock Canyon Road, Yucca Valley, CA 92284

## DATE and TIME

Sunday, Oct 29th, 9a to 10:30a

*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 walking portion will not exceed 1 mile. Terrain may 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–this is a beginner course designed for anyone who is interested in getting started hiking!

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Instructor-provided hand-outs such as packing lists for hiking, JTNP trail descriptions, and safety/emergency protocol

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation

## GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Sarah Witt

Sarah is the Director of Desert Institute, and getting outside is a priority for her! She's an avid hiker and climber, and when the time is there, she's always stoked to backpack and spend a few nights out on the trail. As a self-taught wilderness woman, she knows how challenging it can be to figure out how to “get into it” and learn the ropes. She's happy to help you get off on the right foot, and wishes you many joyful journeys as you get on your way!

## PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll begin in the nature center by going over what you'll want to bring with you on a hike, the kinds of clothing you'll want to wear and pack for different conditions and locations, and how to choose the right trails for your abilities. We'll step outside for a tangible experience of real trail terrain and small elevation gains (and losses), and will end the class with Q and A back in the classroom. All participants are required to submit a [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) ahead of time.

## WHAT TO BRING

Here's what we suggest for all of our field classes. (Which is already putting you on the right track!) For this class, not all items are necessary, but we do require close-toed shoes that are durable and sturdy, such as sneakers or hiking boots. We also require participants to bring water. For an hour-long class, 1L is sufficient.

### 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

# 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.