



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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SNAKES OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

FIELD CLASS / FALL 2023

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This is an introductory classroom-based course about all things snakes, with a short and easy field excursion to learn how to identify the kinds of places snakes like to hang out (and maybe spot one too!) We'll discuss the species of snakes commonly (or less commonly) seen in Joshua Tree National Park, how to differentiate between venomous and nonvenomous snakes locally, and how to safely and responsibly view and interact with wild snakes. This course is open to all ages and is family-friendly!

MEETING LOCATION

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

DATE and TIME

September 29th, 3p to 7p

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: LEISURELY

The majority of the class involves no physical activity. There will be a short walk immediately around Black Rock Nature Center, no longer than 0.5 miles with little to no elevation gain. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

None (participants under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Paisley Ramstead

Paisley Ramstead is a lifelong resident of the Coachella Valley and an avid desert naturalist with a strong interest in conservation. Paisley has worked various conservation and field biology roles in recent years, though most recognize her from her volunteer community outreach work to help her neighbors feel more comfortable around and better identify local reptiles!

PROGRAM AGENDA

We will start out by discussing the different snakes found throughout the park. After we've become familiar with species we might see here in the park (and at home), we will take a beginner-friendly nature walk in the area around the nature center to discuss habitat and how to spot snakes while hiking. We'll be outside for about an hour, and will close out the day with a recap activity, Q&A, and the opportunity to meet Paisley's pet California kingsnake—a harmless species that can be found in JTNP & throughout California.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

This is a family-friendly class! **All participants must complete the [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) at least one day ahead of the program start date.**

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

Required equipment

- none

Recommended

- none

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.