



**DESERT INSTITUTE**  
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL  
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,  
Yucca Valley, 92284

# DARK SKY PHOTOGRAPHY

**FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: JON NORRIS**

**MAY 11TH, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM**

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Enjoy the spectacular night skies of Joshua Tree National Park during this evening workshop, and develop new skills while learning from and shooting alongside an experienced landscape photographer. You'll learn how to scout and plan interesting astrophotography images, shoot a timelapse to capture star trails, and how to capture the Milky Way best. This dark sky workshop will follow a series of practical lessons but will be a relaxed environment in which you can set your own pace to ensure you get the guidance and encouragement you're looking for. Participants must provide their own photography equipment.

## PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll start with a quick workshop orientation session to review camera gear and settings, go over the itinerary, and answer any questions. Then we'll spend the early evening/sunset scouting for compositions before taking a quick in-field snack break. As it gets dark, we'll start our dark sky, star trails, and milky way photography training, when you'll have plenty of time to ask questions and practice your new learning.

## MEETING LOCATION

[Cap Rock Parking Lot](#) at Joshua Tree National Park, approximately 10.5 miles from the West Entrance Station in Joshua Tree

*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.*

## REQUIRED PREPARATION\*

**Waiver:** All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

**Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle):** For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass you may use that at the entrance!

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

**Easy** Slow-paced walking on maintained dirt trails and pathways with your camera gear, up to 2 miles. Don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have questions about your ability to participate. .

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation
- Photography equipment

## 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 (please leave no trace)
- 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

### Required for this course:

- Digital camera (DSLR or Mirrorless)
- Wide-angle fast lens with manual focus ability. An f/2.8 (or faster) 14-24mm full frame equivalent focal length is essential for nighttime photography.
- Sturdy tripod
- Remote shutter release intervalometer
- Extra camera batteries (charged)
- Spare memory cards
- Camera/lens cleaning supplies
- Your camera manual. You must know at least the basic functions of your camera. We'll go through what else you need to know during the workshop.
- Small backpack or camera bag

- Headlamp or flashlight (with a red filter if possible)
- PhotoPills App
- Download the PhotoPills app onto your mobile phone prior to arriving at the workshop (there is no cell reception in JTNP). We'll be using this app extensively to scout and plan Milky Way and Star Trail images. You can download the PhotoPills app for iPhone or Android.
- Lightweight Hiking Chair (Optional), this makes the wait for darkness (after scouting locations during twilight) and star trail time lapses far more comfortable.

## **GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR**

Jon Norris is a professional landscape photographer and workshop guide, a JTNPA business member, and a Desert Institute volunteer. Jon offers one-to-one and small group workshops, plus photographic adventure tours, in Joshua Tree National Park. He started taking photos at 14 with his trusty Zenit 10, teaching himself the fundamentals of photography via countless rolls of poorly exposed 35 mm film. Born in the UK, Jon spent 25 years working in aerospace engineering (15 years while living in France and Germany). As a recovering engineer, he now divides his time between marketing and photography and lives in Lake Forest, OC.

## ***SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY***

There is no cell service in the park! Please allow ample time to arrive at the meeting location; park entrances may be very busy on weekends (see FAQs). Please make sure you check weather conditions and dress accordingly.



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## FAQ+ \_

### WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**  
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please 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***, please plan accordingly.

### WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

### DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

*Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine*, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

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.

### WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

### 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) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

