Death Valley lies in the southwestern United States. It is part of a large desert, called the Mojave (Mo-hah-vee). This hot, dry land receives only about two inches of rain each year. There have been a couple of years when the region got no rain at all. This makes it the driest place in the country.

This place is the hottest in the country, too. In summer, the daytime temperature is often higher than 120 degrees. Nighttime temperatures can be as high as 100. Winter temperatures are much lower. You might even feel cold there at night in the winter months.

Even though it is a desert, Death Valley is not just a vacant, empty place. It’s a park, and nearly a million people go there each year. Because it gets so hot in the summer, spring is the best time to go there.

There is a lot to do in Death Valley. You can see snow-capped mountains, sand dunes, even a few creeks and streams. You can ride a bike, take a hike, watch birds, and hear talks by park staff. You can tour an old house called Scotty’s Castle.

You may also see a lot of wildlife. From mammals like bighorn sheep, jackrabbits and bats, to insects like butterflies. Hundreds of kinds of birds can be found there, too. Tiny fish, called pupfish, live in one of the creeks. The lower parts of the park are too hot for some kinds of cactus. But more than twelve different kinds grow in the higher places, and on the mountains.