



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Death Valley National
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Death Valley News Release

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Death Valley NP Proposes Fee Change at Scotty's Castle

Death Valley National Park is seeking input about a proposed fee change at Scotty's Castle.

Scotty's Castle is a historic house museum located in the northern part of Death Valley National Park in California. It is the key feature of the Death Valley Scotty Historic District, and is significant because of its association with the colorful mining conman Walter "Death Valley Scotty" Scott and its beautiful architecture, original furnishings, and artwork.

Today, the Castle contains thousands of objects that date from the period of time of Albert and Bessie Johnson's ownership (1920s through early 1940s). Some of the furniture and artwork were purchased in Europe and are now up to 500 years old. Other pieces were commissioned for the Castle during the 1920s and are unique. Original textiles such as personal clothing, curtains, tapestries and rugs are on display in the Castle. These objects are arranged as they were in the house originally, not in cases or behind glass. Visitors are only allowed to enter the Castle via ranger-guided tours in order to protect this historic collection.

Tours of Scotty's Castle began in 1936, under the direction of Bessie Johnson. At that time, tour tickets cost \$1.10 per person. The National Park Service continued charging for tours after it acquired the historic property in 1970.

Tour fees at Scotty's Castle are collected under the authorization for cost-recovery of living history programs in 16 U.S.C 1a-2(g) which states "parks may sell at fair market value products and services in the conduct of living history exhibits and interpretive demonstrations" and to "credit the proceeds there from to the appropriation bearing the cost of such exhibits and demonstrations." At Scotty's Castle, this revenue is used to pay for equipment, salary and benefits for interpretive staff of park rangers, park guides, and volunteers doing the living history programs or directly supporting these programs.

In recent years, ticket revenue has not been sufficient to cover the cost of the living history operations at Scotty's Castle and the shortfall has been covered from Death Valley National Park's base appropriation, which has impacted other park operations.

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Tour fees were last raised in 2005. Expenses have increased since then due to inflation and new costs, such as the contract fees for the online reservation system at www.recreation.gov.

The proposed fee changes include changing the fee structure to comply with national standards. Seniors would be required to have the Senior or Access Pass to receive a 50% discount.

Current and proposed ticket prices for the House Tour or Underground Tour:

	<u>Adult (16-91)</u>	<u>Senior/ Access Pass</u>	<u>Youth (6-15)</u>	<u>Children (<5yrs)</u>
Current:	\$11	\$9	\$6	\$0
Proposed:	\$15	\$7.5	\$7.5	\$0

The Combination Tour at Scotty's Castle is a discounted price for visitors that purchase tickets for both a 1-hour House Tour and a 1-hour Underground Tour on the same day.

	<u>Adult (16-91)</u>	<u>Senior/ Access Pass</u>	<u>Youth (6-15)</u>	<u>Children (<5yrs)</u>
Current:	\$20	\$16	\$10	\$0
Proposed:	\$25	\$12.5	\$12.5	\$0

The Lower Vine Hiking Tour is a 2 ½ - hour, 2-mile round-trip walk to the historic ranch complex that was Scotty's true home. The public may only visit the site by ranger-guided tour.

	<u>Adult (16-91)</u>	<u>Senior/ Access Pass</u>	<u>Youth (6-15)</u>	<u>Children (<5yrs)</u>
Current:	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$0
Proposed:	\$20	\$10	\$10	\$0

Prior to making this fee change proposal, the National Park Service reviewed the prices of tours offered elsewhere that are comparable to the various tours offered at Scotty's Castle. The ticket prices for tours of some other historic homes are:

<u>Tour Name, Location</u>	<u>Length of Tour</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Senior</u>	<u>Youth</u>
Hearst Castle, San Simeon, CA	45 min	\$25	NA	\$12
Winchester, San Jose, CA	60 min	\$30	\$27	\$20
Biltmore, Asheville, NC	60 min	\$81	\$81	\$5
Mark Twain House, CT	45 min	\$16	\$14	\$10

Proposed fees would begin January 1, 2012. Pre-purchased tickets bought before December 31 will still be honored at the current rates. Advanced ticket purchases can be made at www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

The National Park Service is seeking input from the public and interested groups from now until September 15, 2011. A final decision will be made based on that input, as well as budgetary concerns, and comparisons with similar sites elsewhere. Please send your comments to the Superintendent, Death Valley National Park, PO Box 569, Death Valley, CA 92328; or email deva_planning@nps.gov, or 760-786-2392 x 225.

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