



We're so glad you'll be joining us for this year's

Passover in the Desert: *Freedom Through Faith*

חופש דרך אמונה | *Chofesh Derech Emunah*

Panamint Valley, Southeastern California

IMPORTANT LINKS

Carpool: To reduce impact, we ask everyone to carpool. Please visit this [carpool page](#) as soon as possible to register as a driver or passenger. Then, connect with fellow travelers and share the pilgrimage experience.

Packing List: Remember to pack everything you need, including lunch, for a healthy festival experience.

First Aid & Desert Safety: Prepare yourself for the desert and be safe while there.

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Main Festival

The festival is from Thursday, April 13, 3:00 pm (dinner served until 9:00 pm) to Monday, April 17, 1:00 pm. Unity and cohesion within the village help us create a sacred community. With this intention, we ask that you attend the festival from beginning to end.

If you are unable to come by the Thursday night festival beginning, please arrive no later than Friday morning at 9:00 am to arrive in time for the Opening Circle. Please plan your return travel so you can participate fully through Closing Circle on Monday.

A full schedule, the list of events as they come in, and a sampling of our program offerings are available on our website.

Pre-Festival Overnight Wilderness Solo

Begins Tuesday, April 11, 3:00 pm. In order for participants to experience the full benefit of this program and to maintain the integrity of the village experience, we require all participants to remain through the end of the Main Festival.

Post-Festival Breakdown

You are welcome to join those of us staying until Tuesday morning to break down the village. We ask that if you decide to stay until Tuesday, you pitch in to help close camp. We provide a special Monday night campfire and free dinner for all who remain to support breakdown.

TRIBES

Tribes are groups of about 10–12 participants who come together to create community connection and to support each other in the Passover journey. Your tribe will help you prepare for your Wilderness Encounter on Saturday afternoon, a personal time for introspection and solitude in the desert. Tribes have a daily gathering time and your tribe will also be your kitchen service team.

Each tribe has a Rosh (head) as its leader and facilitator. Roshim (plural of Rosh), designated elders, Wilderness Torah staff, and members of the Village Planning Council are all available to support you through your experience. Your Rosh (facilitator) will be in touch with you via email to welcome your group before the festival begins.

CO-CREATED VILLAGE

Passover in the Desert is a co-created, community celebration! If you're interested in making an offering in the form of a teaching, healing art, sacred fire tending, prayer leadership, ancestral skills, or anything else, please visit our [Program Offerings page](#) and complete a brief form.

AVODAH

If you are participating in Avodah (work exchange) for setup or any time onsite before the main festival begins, please plan to arrive at the time identified in your Avodah confirmation email. We are not prepared for you to show up more than six hours early. Once onsite, please connect with Daniella to receive further instructions.

ESSENTIAL THINGS TO BRING

1. **Food for Your Lunches** — Please bring your own simple foods for two picnic lunches (Friday & Sunday) enclosed in an animal proof container, such as a cooler. Wilderness Torah does not provide refrigeration or ice, so please bring things that do not need refrigeration. A list of recommended foods is below and on our [Food & Water page](#).
2. **Coming to the Pre-Festival?** — We will not be serving lunch on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We ask you to bring your own food for these meals with the considerations listed above.
3. **Water** — We will be providing a water truck for all communal cooking and drinking needs. Please bring 1–2 gallons of water to keep at your tent for personal use throughout the festival and two 1-liter water bottles to fill and drink from.
4. **Plates & Utensils** — Everyone must bring their own plate, bowl, mug, and utensils, plus wine cup and/or cloth napkin if you use them. We recommend you label these clearly with your name.
5. **Identity** — Consider bringing your wooden name tag from a previous festival if you have one
6. **Communal Décor** — Please bring cushions, tapestries, rugs, blankets, sacred items for our altars, low tables, pretty hanging things, and anything else you would like to contribute to cultivate a sacred and joyous space.
7. **Drums & Other Instruments** — We play a lot of music in the village. Bring your instruments to join in on the fun!

FIRST AID

You are responsible for your own comfort and safety. It's a good idea to bring your own basic first aid supplies for your convenient access (bandaids, alcohol wipes, pain reliever, Neosporin, aloe vera, etc.).

There will be a designated safety crew with nurses, doctors, and people who are trained in Wilderness First Aid and/or Wilderness First Response. Wilderness Torah will provide a comprehensive first aid kit on site for emergencies. The kit will be located at the Healing Hut.

We will also have a satellite phone onsite for emergencies only. The nearest hospital is Ridgecrest Regional Hospital, 45 minutes from the site.

DESERT HAZARDS & SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Keep an eye out for yourself and others. The more prepared you are, the more fun you can have! Please review the following safety tips before coming to the desert:

- *Dehydration* | The air is very dry. Even if you don't feel hot, dry, or thirsty, it's important to KEEP DRINKING WATER; at least 1 gallon per day. The hearth will also provide electrolyte powder for you to add to your water. Use it!
- *Hygiene* | Hand-washing is very important! For the safety of everyone, please wash your hands EVERY time AFTER toileting, BEFORE entering the kitchen/food areas, and BEFORE every meal.
- *Uneven Terrain* (slips, trips, and falls) | Take a breath, stay aware, and slow down — that's what we're here for.
- *Sharp Cacti* | There are not many cacti at our site, but it is the desert, so they are around. Be aware of many varieties and sizes.
- *Low Visibility at Night* | Bring a flashlight and/or headlamp and extra batteries.
- *Weather* | Bring warm layers and bedding. Tie down your gear so it doesn't blow away in strong winds.
- *Remote Location* | Plan to arrive in the daylight and bring everything you need with you.
- *Camping* | Do not make camp in a dry wash. Flash floods develop quickly in the desert.

PACKING LIST

Be prepared for a range of weather, from warm and sunny to rainy and chilly. **Remember that at our festivals, everyone brings their own food for picnic lunches.** Pack easy-to-prepare food that will stay fresh until you eat it.

Optional Items

- Something to read
- Journal to write or draw in
- Camera
- Pillow
- Camping chair or cushion to sit on
- Yoga mat
- Camping shower (no shower facilities are available onsite; bring your own water)
- Slip on sandals for communal spaces
- Your *siddur* (prayer book) if you use one
- Musical instruments
- Massage oils, hydrosols (herbal sprays), healing ointments, etc. for the Healing Hut
- Stories, songs, and poems to share around the fire
- Costumes — Fun, funky, festival attire for celebrations!
- Hand towel

Communal Items

- Decorations for the Tent of Meeting and other spaces — tapestries, rugs, pillows, blankets, pretty things that hang, etc.
- Food from your fruit tree or garden to share ([Email us](#) by Wednesday, April 5, if you have a large quantity of something to donate so we can avoid purchasing extra)
- Books for the *Beit Midrash* (study lounge) on various themes: Passover, liberation, earth-based living, social justice, Jewish culture and religion, traditional Jewish texts such as the *Talmud*, *Mishna Torah*, or *siddurim* (ideally with English). Please add your book contribution to this [Google Doc](#) before bringing them to the desert. Make sure to write your name and number on the inside of the your book(s).
- Anything else you'd like to offer the village

Personal and Camping Gear

- Sleeping bag (rated 20° or below)
- Sleeping pad (Thermarest, Enslite, or other)
- Tent, ground cover, and rain fly
- Stakes and hammer to stake down your tent
- Warm jacket
- Fleece or sweater (not cotton)
- Gloves (not cotton)
- Winter hat and scarf
- Underwear
- Thermal underwear (not cotton)
- Warm socks (not cotton)
- Hiking boots or shoes
- Comfortable shoes
- Short-sleeve shirts (at least one not cotton)
- Long-sleeve shirt
- Long pants
- Comfy, warm clothes to sleep in
- Comfy, loose clothes to lounge in
- Festive attire for Shabbat if you wish (many participants wear white Friday night to honor the ceremonial nature of this weekly holiday)
- Rain pants
- Rain jacket with hood
- Sunglasses, sunhat, and/or light scarf
- Bandana or kerchief
- Sunscreen & lip balm with SPF
- Pocket knife or multi-tool
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc.)
- Flashlight and/or headlamp and extra batteries
- Any medications you need
- Small daypack
- Bags to pack out your personal garbage
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Personal first aid kit (see above for details)
- Bathing suit and towel for river hike

Why not cotton?

Wet or damp cotton is associated with hypothermia — it continually wicks heat away from the body. Other fibers, such as wool and synthetic fleece insulate even if they're damp or wet, and are therefore preferred for outdoor recreation and especially wilderness use. However, loose cotton clothes (old school desert attire) are great for lounging around camp.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PICNIC LUNCHES

Below are some suggested items you can bring for picnic lunches. Our snack table will always be open with fresh fruit, matzah, nut butters, and other snacks, and we will serve a hearty breakfast and dinner each day.

Remember, people often eat less in the desert heat, so you may need less food than you think. If you'd like to cook, feel free to bring a small stove, but we don't feel it's necessary.

While we invite you to be in the Passover spirit, the food you bring does not necessarily need to be kosher since it will not be stored in the kitchen, and you will use your personal dishes. We have a separate dish washing area for the Wilderness Torah kitchen for those who would like to wash their dishes in a kosher kitchen, with special permission from Chef Baruch.

Learn more about the [food served at Passover in the Desert](#).

Lunch ideas that require no refrigeration

- Cheese (many hard cheeses are fine for a few days)
- Jerky
- Dried meats/fish
- Fruit/veggies that don't go bad quickly like oranges, apples, bananas, carrots
- Nuts, seeds, and dried fruit
- A box of matzah if you really love it (we'll have a bunch available)
- Energy bars, fruit strips, and/or granola type bars
- Anything canned (don't forget a can opener)

DIRECTIONS *Note: Ridgecrest is a good place to buy last minute stuff*

From the Bay Area

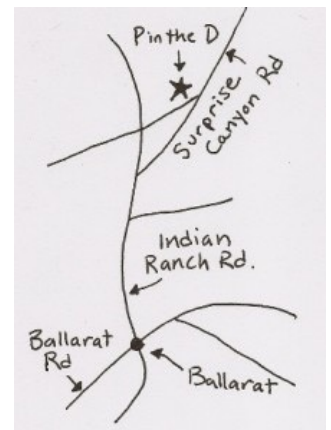
1. Take I-580 E toward Hayward approx. 60 mi
2. Merge onto I-5 S 188 mi
3. Take exit 257 for CA-58 toward Bakersfield 0.3 mi
4. Turn left at Blue Star Memorial Hwy/CA-58 E/Rosedale Hwy 8.4 mi
5. Turn right at CA-43 S/CA-58 E/Enos Ln 1.0 mi
6. Turn left at Blue Star Memorial Hwy/CA-58 E/Rosedale Hwy
7. Continue to follow Rosedale Hwy 12.1 mi
8. Rosedale Hwy turns slightly left and becomes 24th St 0.6 mi
9. Continue onto 23rd St/CA-178 E, continue to follow CA-178 E 85.4 mi
10. Turn left at CA-14 N/CA-178 E/Midland Trail 2.8 mi
11. Slight right at CA-178 E/W Inyokern Rd 12.2 mi
12. Turn right at N China Lake Blvd (signs for State Route 178/Trona) 2 mi
13. Turn left at CA-178 E/E Ridgecrest Blvd 16.7 mi
14. Continue onto Trona Rd 9.6 mi Continue onto Trona Wildrose Rd 19.1 mi
15. Turn right at Ballarat Rd 3.6 mi

From the ghost town of Ballarat (no services)

1. Turn left at Indian Ranch Road. Drive 1.9 miles
2. Turn right on to Surprise Canyon Road at the white rock marked with a red S7
3. We will set up our camp 0.4 miles from Indian Ranch Road

From the Los Angeles Area

1. Take I-5 N toward Sacramento
2. Take the State Route 14 N exit toward Palmdale/Lancaster 0.6 mi
3. Merge onto CA-14 N 69.0 mi
4. Turn right at CA-14 N/Midland Trail Continue to follow CA-14 N 44.4 mi
5. Slight right at CA-178 E/W Inyokern Rd 12.2 mi
6. Turn right at N China Lake Blvd (signs for State Route 178/Trona) 2.0 mi
7. Turn left at CA-178 E/E Ridgecrest Blvd Continue to follow CA-178 E 16.7 mi
8. Continue onto Trona Rd 9.6 mi
9. Continue onto Trona Wildrose Rd 19.1 mi
10. Turn right at Ballarat Rd 3.6 mi



From the ghost town of Ballarat (no services)

1. Turn left at Indian Ranch Road. Drive 1.9 miles.
2. Turn right on to Surprise Canyon Road at the white rock marked with a red S7
3. We will set up our camp 0.4 miles from Indian Ranch Road

If you are coming from another location, map your location to [the intersection Ballarat Road & Indian Ranch Road in Ballarat, CA](#) and follow the directions above from Ballarat.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Freedom Through Faith

We learn that the deepest spiritual encounters of the Torah happen in the Wilderness. The legend of Nachshon teaches us that in order to reach these spiritual encounters, we have to hold steady to faith even in the most challenging moments. Only then, can we leave the narrow place behind and meet the vast expanse that is the wilderness.

As you walk toward this encounter, consider your own relationship with faith and freedom:

1. What does faith mean to you? How does it appear in your life?
2. What does freedom mean to you? Where does it exist in your life? Where does it feel lacking? How do you honor the freedoms you identify in your life?
3. Where in your life right now are you encountering a test of faith? What courage are you calling in as you encounter this test? What sense of freedom do you imagine might emerge with your faith resolute?

אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבא עזרי

I turn my eyes to the mountains; From where does my help come? (Psalm 121)