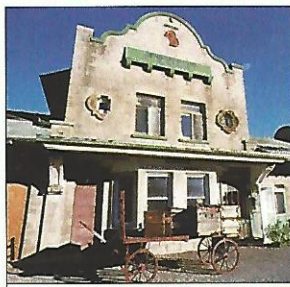


**Las Vegas** The city has been the largest center of legalized gambling in the United States since the 1930s. Las Vegas, one of the fastest growing urban areas, is now home to dozens of casinos as well as numerous concert halls, theme parks, and enormous resort-hotels.



**Rhyolite Ghost Town** The town on the edge of Death Valley has retained the appearance of a typical gold rush settlement. Rhyolite's most unusual sight is a house made of beer bottles.



**Grand Canyon** The Colorado River created this 1,700-meter-deep, 30-kilometer-wide, and 450-kilometer-long canyon by carving a channel into the stone of the Colorado Plateau. Arizona's most spectacular tourist attraction is visited by millions of tourists each year. Visitors can enjoy incredible panoramic views of the canyon's walls from the many lookouts in the area.

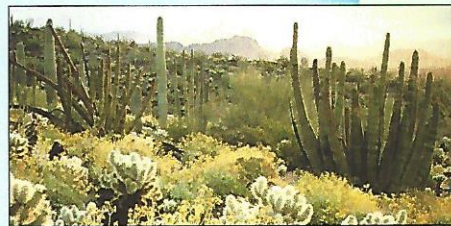


**Death Valley** The national park in California encompasses a desert landscape with rock formations, sand dunes, and temperatures up to 55 °C. Death Valley is home to a few plants and animals despite its climate. Ancient rock drawings indicate that the area was inhabited in prehistoric times.

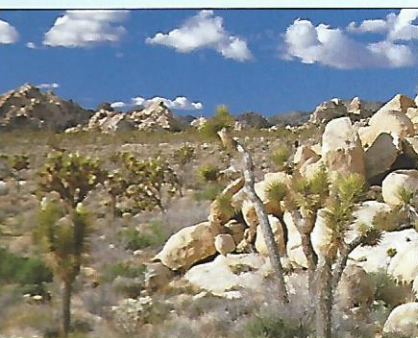
**Sequoia National Park** The national park in the southern section of the Sierra Nevada range encompasses deep canyons, mountain lakes, small rivers, dense forests, and high mountains. The highest mountains in the area rise more than 4,000 meters.



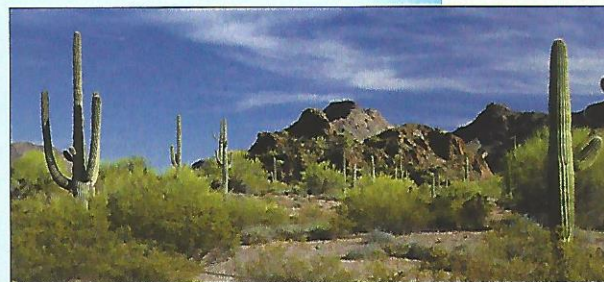
**Los Angeles** The city's numerous highways and freeways are the arteries of Los Angeles, a sprawling urban area covering more than 1,200 km<sup>2</sup>. Famous towns and neighborhoods in the Los Angeles area include Malibu, Beverly Hills, and Long Beach. The Paul Getty Museum is one of Los Angeles' major cultural attractions.



**Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument** In April and May many rare species of cactus, including the unusual organ pipe cacti, bloom in this national monument.



**Joshua Tree National Park** The park northeast of Indio in Southern California encompasses a section of the Mojave Desert and features dry salt lakes and rugged plants such as cacti, yucca palms, and juniper trees.



**Sonoran Desert** This desert in Southern California and Mexico is full of surprises: the gigantic Saguaro cactuses in the desert live for up to 200 years and grow up to 12 meters high. The now endangered cacti were used by local Native Americans to construct their homes.



**Phoenix** Arizona's capital city is situated in one of the hottest and most arid areas of the Southwest. Because of its warm, dry winter weather, Phoenix is a popular vacation and retirement destination. The area around the city includes several large "retirement cities".

