CALIFORNIA
BORREGO SPRINGS

Surrounded by 600,000-acre Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the town of Borrego Springs enjoys starkly beautiful canyons, a relaxingly remote location, and a mild winter climate. But its citizens have made sure their prized night skies stay dark—and the stars stay bright—by following a strict lighting ordinance.

AT NIGHT Join local astronomer Dennis Mammana at one of his frequent star parties, complete with a 14-inch telescope, just outside town. Or attend events at the Springs at Borrego, Borrego Springs Resort Golf Club & Spa, or Borrego Lutheran Church, which hosts free programs with astronomers Jim and Grace Rickard. “If you’re staying in a hotel, you can just lie out on a lounge chair and look up,” says Betsy Knaak, chair of the Borrego Springs Dark Sky Coalition. “Sometimes it’s so bright you can see the stars reflected in the swimming pool.”

BY DAY Immerse yourself in the park on a hike, see desert-inspired art at the Borrego Art Institute, or peruse desert-related tomes at the Nature Center, one of the region’s best natural-history bookstores.