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One needs to know that certain Banach spaces such as ℓ_∞ and $L_\infty[0,1]$ are $C(K)$ -spaces in disguise. The standard derivation of such facts requires using the Gelfand-Naimark theorem for commutative C^* -algebras over the complex scalar field. In this pedagogical note we give a simple characterization of real Banach algebras which are isometrically isomorphic to (real) $C(K)$ -spaces on a compact Hausdorff space K . (Received January 23, 2006)