

USA – GRAND CANYON & THE SOUTHWEST

15-days / 14-nights hotel based guided walking & sightseeing in America's spectacular southwest



See the landscapes and breathtaking scenery of America's southwest in this unforgettable holiday. Visiting some of the USA's most memorable and dramatic national parks, this tour takes you to Utah, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona, the land of movie Westerns, never-ending horizons, unique geological formations, and a fascinating history, dating back over 1400 years to the settlements of mesa-dwelling Native American peoples. Experience the majestic splendour and vastness of the Grand Canyon with visits to the national parks of Zion, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Canyonlands and more. Stay dramatic locations in or near to the national parks and in the dazzling city of Las Vegas, and learn about the history and culture of Native American tribes.

Departs: 6th April; 4th May; 12th October, 2019

Cost from: \$10,010 per person twin share Single room supplement from \$2375

Includes: 14 nights' accommodation; full board (breakfast, lunch and dinner); guided walks led by specialist local guides and tour leader; transport by air-conditioned coach / minibus; sightseeing and entrance fees; tips.

Not included: International flights, other meals, drinks, visa or passport fees, personal expenses.

Grading: Walks are 2 to 7 miles (3 to 11km) with up to 2000 feet (600m) of ascent. Some walks follow paved paths, others are on more rocky terrain or slickrock. The weather is typically hot and dry during the day and many walks have very little shade.

Accommodation: 3 to 4-star modern hotels offering spacious rooms with excellent facilities. Most hotels have a pool and some also offer spa or Jacuzzi, where you can relax in the evening after the day's walks. Hotels are set amongst magnificent scenery and offer ideal locations for access to the national parks.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive in Las Vegas. We stay in a 3-star hotel and casino located just minutes from the world-famous Las Vegas Strip. Tonight you will have some time to wander under the dazzling neon lights and explore the festive atmosphere of Sin City, the gambling capital of the US, if not the world.

Day 2: We travel to Snow Canyon State Park, in Utah, for a loop hike passing by ancient lava flows and slickrock with moqui marbles, small sandstone spheres with iron oxide shells. Later, we learn about the area's prehistory with a visit to a dinosaur track site. We continue to Zion National Park for two nights.

Day 3: We explore Zion National Park, walking the iconic Angels Landing trail. We cross the Virgin River and walk through cottonwood, piñon and juniper, then hike a series of switchbacks to Scout Lookout where we are rewarded with far-reaching views of the pink and red sandstone canyon. Those with a head for heights can continue along a narrow ridge with steep drop-offs, holding on to the fixed chains, to Angels Landing summit.

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Day 4: An early start this morning to hike the Watchman trail, lined with cactus and hardy desert vegetation, to a lookout point on the slopes of the towering Watchman Spire, for views across the valley below. Afterwards we drive to Bryce Canyon National Park in time for sunset. This evening, don your Stetson and boots as we head out for an evening of entertainment with a cowboy dinner show.

Day 5: A full day in the eerie and extraordinary landscapes of Bryce Canyon National Park, where we hike surrounded by 'hoodoos' – pillars of rock sculpted into strange and fantastic shapes. Here we see the forces of wind and rain, frost and snow truly at work, eroding the landscape into these distinctive formations. We walk on the Navajo Loop trail and Peekaboo trail for fantastic views of the hoodoos – keep your eyes open for Queen Victoria! Afterwards we retire to our hotel right outside the national park.

Day 6: A morning drive along scenic Highway 12 past petrified sand dunes to Capitol Reef National Park in the heart of Utah's red rock country. We hike on red dirt, sand and slick rock to the Strike Valley overlook, for views of the Waterpocket Fold, a long warp in the earth's crust which has weathered over eons to form cliffs, impassable reefs, domes, towers and arches. Later we head to our waterside lodge at Lake Powell, formed in 1963 by the Glen Canyon dam on the Colorado River.

Day 7: We walk a circuit at Little Wild Horse Canyon, a slot canyon known for its curved rock walls and the Narrows, where we'll need to turn sideways to get through. After a little scrambling we come to the top of Bell Canyon and hike down canyon to the trailhead. We drive to Green River, where our hotel overlooks the town's namesake river.

Day 8: We have two walks in Arches National Park, a red rock wonderland of over 2000 stone arches, as well as a multitude of rock formations including towering pinnacles, sandstone fins, and giant balancing rocks. Delicate Arch is the largest free-standing arch in the world and has become a symbol of Utah; we walk past the historic Wolfe Ranch cabin and Ute Indian petroglyphs on our way to Delicate Arch. Later there is a challenging walk with spectacular views through Devils Garden to the long, narrow Landscape Arch and Double O Arch. After we head to Moab, an outdoor enthusiast's paradise, where we spend two nights.

Day 9: We head to Canyonlands National Park, to the remote Needles area (named for the sandstone spires which dominate), where we complete the Lost Canyon and Squaw Canyon loop. Squaw Canyon is a dry wash, contrasting with the lush vegetation of Lost Canyon.

Day 10: Scenic Highway 163 leads us into breathtaking Monument Valley, with its red sandstone monoliths and buttes made famous by countless Westerns, and we take a Jeep tour exploring this iconic landscape. We drive on to Canyon de Chelly where we stay in the historic, Navajo-owned Thunderbird Lodge.

Day 11: We explore Canyon de Chelly and surrounding sacred Navajo land on an all-day walk with a local Navajo guide. We walk along the slickrock of Bare Trail to the base of the canyon, then walk along the canyon floor, sometimes through creeks, past Native American ruins and rock art.

Day 12: We travel to the Grand Canyon to spend two nights in this extraordinary place. En route, we visit the National Historic Site of Hubbell Trading Post, established in 1878 and still operating today. We head to Hopi Mesas to visit the Walpi, an ancient Native American village on the First Mesa, where there are

Day 13: We descend into the canyon with a local guide on the South Kaibab Trail. The trail connects the South Rim with the Colorado River and offers sweeping views of the canyon. We walk as far as Skeleton Point from where we get a view of the Colorado River 5200 feet (1585m) below us. This walk provides a completely different understanding of the immensity of the canyon which most visitors do not experience.

Day 14: We bid farewell to the Grand Canyon and drive on historic Route 66 to fabulous Las Vegas, for a final night to perhaps gamble a few dollars, or see one of the city's famous shows.

Day 15: Tour ends after breakfast.

Outdoor Travel offers guided or self-guided walking holidays in many parts of Australia including Tasmania, Victoria & South Australia, the USA, Canada, Japan, China, the UK, Ireland & in Europe. Popular are England's **Coast-to-Coast** trail or Scotland's **West Highland Way**, the **Ring of Kerry** in Ireland the **Camino de Santiago** in France & Spain, Italy's **Amalfi** or **Cinque Terre** Coast or **Via Francigena**.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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