

# National Parks of the Southwest USA

**Trip style:** Small group holidays

**Destination:** 📍 USA

**Trip code:** GDC14-WHW10

**Grades:** 1, 2

**Carbon Footprint:** 🌳 2767kg CO2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

For epic landscapes, unique wildlife, mighty mountains, rushing rivers, and soul-stirring views, the southwest USA is unrivalled. This holiday promises endless opportunities for walkers, adventurers, and those keen to reconnect with nature. Not only will you spend time in Las Vegas, but you'll also discover iconic landscapes in Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, and Zion national parks, and visit the biggest showstopper of them all, the Grand Canyon.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering hoodoos at Bryce Canyon National Park
- Admiring waterfalls and surreal rock formations at Zion National Park
- Walking in the Devils Garden area at Arches National Park
- Hiking the Bright Angel Trail at Grand Canyon
- Taking a 4x4 tour around Monument Valley
- Exploring Fremont Street, the beating heart of Las Vegas
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 12 people)

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks with local leaders
- 14 nights touring accommodation across Southwest USA
- 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 14 dinners (2025)
- 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 6 dinners (2026)
- All sightseeing, tips, and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All in-destination transport

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1:** Arrive in Las Vegas

Once you arrive at Las Vegas airport you'll transfer to our downtown hotel to meet the rest of the group and flight times permitted take time to meet with your leader and fellow travellers.

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### **Day 2:** Snow Canyon

Distance: 3.5 miles (6km) Ascent: 600ft (180m) Leaving Las Vegas through the Mojave Desert, we'll be able to spot the area's famous Joshua trees in the distance. Then ascending through Virgin River canyon, we'll soon reach the Colorado Plateau, formed of colourful red sandstone formations. We'll head towards St George and Snow Canyon State Park, where we'll hike a fantastic loop trail through ancient lava flows, slickrock with moqui marbles, and along sandy trails. We'll continue to Springdale in Zion National Park where we'll spend the next two nights, stopping along the way to discover something of the area's prehistoric past with a visit to a site famous for its fossilised dinosaur tracks. Dinner is included in a local restaurant tonight.

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### **Day 3:** Zion National Park

Distance: 4 miles (6.5 km) Ascent/Descent: 810 feet (250m) Wake early to enjoy sunrise over the mountains before we spend the whole day in Zion National Park. We'll walk trails along the Virgin River such as Riverwalk, Emerald Pool and the Kayenta trail, ascending the remains of a landslide that occurred thousands of years ago, damming the river and creating a lake. The walk affords stunning views of Zion's iconic landmarks, including the Court of Patriarchs and the Sentinel.

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### **Day 4:** Zion National Park to Bryce Canyon

Distance: 3 miles (5km) Ascent: 650 feet (200m) We'll begin the day with a must-walk route in Zion National Park – the Watchman Trail. Although it's only a short walk, we'll be rewarded with jaw-dropping views of the surrounding rock formations. Later, we'll move on to Bryce Canyon National Park for our two-night stay, arriving in time to witness sunset over the canyon.

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### **Day 5:** Bryce Canyon

Distance: 7.5 miles (12km) Ascent/Descent: 1,900 feet (580m) Today we'll spend a whole day walking in Bryce Canyon. We'll start with the Navajo Loop Trail from Sunrise Point to Queen's Garden, passing pinnacles, spires, and cathedral-like formations. Our route also leads us to a great picnic spot for lunch with beautiful views over ancient bristle cone pines. We'll then continue along the Peekaboo and Navajo Trails before ascending back to the canyon rim. Tonight we'll be entertained at an Ebenezer Cowboy show and dinner.

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### **Day 6:** Capitol Reef National Park

Distance: 7.5 miles (12 km) Ascent/Descent: 750 feet (230m) Enjoy a scenic drive along Highway 12, over petrified sand dunes to Capitol Reef National Park. Once there, we'll hike the Grand Wash Trail along a dry riverbed with high canyon walls, before forking onto the Cassidy Arch trail. With natural rocks carved like stairs, the route climbs

steeply in places, but the effort will be worth it for the bird's eye view of the arch at the top.

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### **Day 7:** Capital Reef to Green River

Distance: 2 miles (3km) Ascent/Descent: 630 feet (190m) Our second day of walking in Capitol Reef National Park begins with an introduction to the incredible petroglyphs created by Fremont and Ancestral Puebloan people, some of which are almost 3,000 years old. It's then on to the Hickman Natural Bridge trail for spectacular views over the Fremont River, Fruita, and the mouth of Cohab Canyon below. Later, we'll head to our waterside hotel on the Green River, the main tributary of the Colorado River and an amazingly wild and beautiful area before heading to a local restaurant for dinner.

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### **Day 8:** Arches National Park

The USA's mighty Arches National Park in Utah is home to over 2,000 natural rock arches - the densest concentration in the world. Carved by wind and water from the rust-red rock, this natural wonderland is simply awe-inspiring, and we'll explore it on our two walks today. Distance: 5.5 miles (9km) Ascent: 500 feet (150m) Our first walk will take in the Double O Arch and Devils Garden area, following a trail that threads through pinyon pine and juniper vegetation and over slickrock. Distance: 3 miles (5km) Ascent: 700 feet (220m) If time allows, our second walk visits one of the most well-known arches, Delicate Arch. Standing at 16m tall, you'll see it pictured on most Utah car licence plates. The out-and-back route is mostly over slickrock and involves a moderate ascent on the approach to the arch, but you'll be bowled over by the view as you round the corner. Following our exploration of Arches National Park we'll head to Moab, our base for the next two nights.

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### **Day 9:** Needles, Canyonlands National Park

Distance: 5 miles (8km) Ascent/Descent: 1,200 feet (370m) We'll head to the 'Needles' area of Canyonlands National Park today, with a short stop at Newspaper Rock - an excellent example of Native American petroglyphs - before we continue to the trailhead. Following part of the Chesler Park trail, we'll take in Elephant Hill on our walk. Along the way, the surrounding rock formations and colours are stunning. We'll head out to a local restaurant for dinner tonight.

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### **Day 10:** Monument Valley

This morning we'll visit the historic site of Fort Bluff for a chance to learn more about the pioneers and what life was like for America's early settlers. Next, we head to Monument Valley, where we'll enjoy a jeep tour around this iconic landscape and experience a Navajo lunch. We then continue the onward drive to Chinle, Canyon de Chelly where we'll be staying in the historic and Navajo-owned Thunderbird Lodge for two nights.

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### **Day 11:** Canyon de Chelly

Distance: 5 miles (8km) Ascent: 600 feet (180m) We'll explore the Canyon de Chelly National Monument and the sacred Navajo land on a full-day guided walk with a local Navajo guide. Our walk starts on the canyon rim and descends along the Bare Trail on slick and exposed rock to the sandy canyon floor. From here, we'll walk past Native American ruins and rock art, at times walking through creeks. We'll then ascend back to the canyon rim and return to

the lodge.

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### **Day 12:** To the Grand Canyon

This morning we visit Horseshoe Bend and take a short walk at Antelope Canyon. We then continue our journey to the Grand Canyon, where we'll stay for the next two nights. We aim to arrive in time to watch as the sun sets over the vast and majestic expanse of America's most famous canyon before an included dinner at the hotel.

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### **Day 13:** The Grand Canyon

Distance: 6 miles (9.5 km) Descent/Ascent: 2,100 feet (650m) Or extend to Havasupai Gardens, additional 3 miles (4.8km) / 950 ft (290m) You'll see the Grand Canyon National Park in all its legendary beauty with our local guide today. We'll follow the Bright Angel Trail and descend to Havasupai Gardens, enjoying the wow-worthy views that surround us as we go. Built in the 1920s, the trail connects the South Rim with the Colorado River and involves a number of switchbacks. When we reach 3-mile rest house, there's an opportunity to refill our water bottles and stop and enjoy the amazing scenery, or for those wanting an extra challenge, we continue the descent to Havasupai Gardens. Once back together we begin the ascent back to the canyon rim by returning on the same path.

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### **Day 14:** To Las Vegas

This morning you'll have some free time before we complete the final leg of our journey. You could arrange a helicopter ride (optional extra, payable locally) to experience the Grand Canyon from a completely different angle. We'll then return to the bright lights of Las Vegas, driving via the historic Route 66, getting back in time for an included final dinner and a chance to experience the casino's or explore city sights like Fremont Street. You could take a helicopter ride (at your own arrangement).

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### **Day 15:** Departure Day

Enjoy a free day before with-flight guests transfer to Las Vegas airport for our overnight return flight back to the UK.

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### **Day 16:** Arrive UK

Arrive back in the UK.

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## **Grand Canyon Plaza Hotel, Grand Canyon - National Parks of the**

The Grand Canyon Plaza Hotel is situated only a mile from the south entrance of the Grand Canyon National Park. The outdoor pool and jacuzzi are perfect for relaxing weary limbs after a long day walking.

## **Hampton Inn & Suites, Springdale - National Parks of the Southw**

Tucked among the towering red rock cliffs of Zion Canyon, the Hampton Inn & Suites offers a great location from which to explore Zion National Park. Rooms have excellent amenities, including a fridge and comfortable beds. Enjoy the outdoor pool and cosy fireplace.

## **Best Western Ruby's Inn, Bryce Canyon - National Parks of the S**

Part of the Best Western chain, Ruby's Inn has a distinctive southwestern feel. The hotel offers both a heated indoor and a seasonal outdoor pool, and comfortable rooms have amenities including tea/coffee making facilities and a fridge. Situated at the entrance to Bryce Canyon National Park, this hotel offers the perfect base for exploring this spectacular area.

## **River Terrace Inn, Green River - National Parks of the Southwes**

Located on the banks of the Green River, the River Terrace Inn has large and comfortable rooms. Relax in the scenic riverside setting, walk the gardens, or take a dip in the outdoor pool.

## **Thunderbird Lodge, Canyon de Chelly - National Parks of the Sou**

Owned and operated by the Navajo Nation, this lodge is a unique and historic property, full of charm and comfort. An interpretation centre located in the on-site trading post will introduce you to the area's history. Rooms are welcoming and feature amenities including in-room coffee maker, fridge, and hairdryer.

## **Red Sands Hotel & Spa, Capitol Reef - National Parks of the Sou**

Located in the heart of Utah's Capitol Reef National Park, this hotel is the perfect base for exploring red rock county. All rooms have mountain views and mod cons including tea and coffee making facilities and air conditioning. There's also a spa and small indoor pool, plus a star deck where you can sit and gaze up at the night skies in the middle of the desert.

## Moab Valley Inn

Located within easy reach of Moab's amenities, the Moab Valley Inn has comfortable, spacious rooms with all mod cons. Designed with relaxation in mind, facilities include an indoor/outdoor heated pool and hot tub, a fitness room, and picnic area.

## The STRAT Hotel, Casino & Tower, Las Vegas - National Parks of

The Strat Hotel offers Las Vegas ambience with a contemporary feel. Located on the strip, the hotel features a seasonal outdoor pool, a fitness centre, and a wide variety of restaurants.

## Tuscany Suites and Casino

Tuscany Suites and Casino Located two blocks from the world-renowned Las Vegas strip, Tuscany Suites and Casino offers comfortable accommodation in this vibrant city. With excellent facilities, guests can take a dip in one of their two pools, enjoy a quick workout in the fitness centre or wind down with a treatment at their spa.

### **Safety information - SHARED WITH ALL WW**

Please inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must consider both group and individual safety at all times. Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you: Please listen to any safety instructions and other directions from the leader Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you. Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List). In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services.. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

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### **Dietary requirements - SHARED WITH ALL WW**

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs. If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

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### **Vaccinations & health information for National Parks of the Southwest USA**

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see if any health precautions are needed. The following websites provide a wealth of information on travelling and health:

[www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) or [www.traveldoctor.co.uk](http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk) Visitors must pay for all medical services. Adequate health insurance is therefore essential.

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## Passport & Visa information for National Parks of the Southwest USA

Passports Passports must be valid for the duration of the trip Visas Most fully vaccinated foreign citizens can enter the USA. You will need to show a valid certificate confirming your vaccination status. Some airlines may require these documents to be shown before boarding as part of their internal rules. The US authorities will accept any COVID-19 vaccine approved for emergency use by the World Health Organisation or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). More details are on the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and US Embassy websites. The USA will accept the UK's proof of COVID-19 recovery and vaccination record and proof of COVID-19 vaccination issued in the Crown Dependencies. Your final vaccine dose must have been administered at least 14 days prior to travel. The CDC website lists the forms of acceptable proof of COVID-19 status. You will need to get a visa or an Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) visa waiver to enter or transit the USA as a visitor for business or leisure purposes. You should consult the US State Department website to determine which you will need. The ESTA allows a stay of up to 90 days for British Citizens and a number of other nationalities. Please check the ESTA website above for the full list of countries and to submit your application at least 72 hours before you travel. Please note that this is the only official ESTA website. There are third-party companies that operate websites which look like the ESTA application site, but which charge a processing fee on top of the official fees. You should be aware that if you have travelled to or have been in Cuba, or have travelled to or been in Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen since 1 March 2011, you are normally not eligible for an ESTA visa waiver and will need to apply for a US visa. Again, you should consult the US State Department website to determine which you will need. The US Embassy advise that travellers who come under the following categories should not attempt to travel on an ESTA and should instead apply for a visa: those who have been arrested (even if the arrest didn't result in a criminal conviction) those who have a criminal record those who have been refused admission into, or have been deported from the USA those who have previously overstayed an ESTA Further details can be found on the US Embassy website. If you're arriving by air or sea you should provide details online as soon as possible and at least 72 hours before travel. This is known as an Electronic System for Travel Authorisation or ESTA. Getting an ESTA is a separate process to providing your airline with advance passenger information (details of your passport, country of residence, address of your first night's accommodation in the US etc). For more information, and to apply online, visit the official ESTA website. Please note that this is the only official ESTA website. There are third-party companies that operate websites which look like the ESTA application site, but which charge a processing fee on top of the official fees.

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airline with advance passenger information (details of your passport, country of residence, address of your first night's accommodation in the US etc). For more information, and to apply online, visit the official ESTA website. Please note that this is the only official ESTA website. There are third-party companies that operate websites which look like the ESTA application site, but which charge a processing fee on top of the official fees.

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### **Packing list - Overseas Guided Walking**

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing. Essentials Walking boots Waterproof jacket Waterproof trousers Insulated jacket/top Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses with a dark lens Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy UK Global Health Insurance Card (formerly known as EHIC) Recommended Collapsible walking poles Swimwear and travel towel Snacks Dry bags Rubbish bags Insect repellent Optional extras Camera Sit mat Flask for hot drinks Durable lunch box Gaiters GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

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